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A Babylonian Parallel to the Story of Job

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I

THE religious literature of Babylonia and Assyria, for which we are still largely dependent¹ upon the literary collection made by the Assyrian king Ashurbanapal (668–626 B.C.) in his palace at Nineveh, may be divided, so far as our present knowledge goes, into five large groups: (1) oracles and omens, (2) incantations, (3) prayers and hymns, (4) ritualistic texts, and (5) myths and legends. Of these five groups the most extensive appears to have been the omen-literature, which covers a vast domain, and furnishes evidence that the Babylonians and Assyrians developed the interpretation of signs connected with phenomena in the heavens or on earth into a science, dominated by sets of principles hardly less extensive than those prevailing in the natural sciences of our day, though of a different order. The observation and interpretation of signs covered the movements of the sun and moon, the position of the planets, the direction of winds, the formation of the clouds, noticeable occurrences among men and animals, the flight of birds and appearance of insects, the mysterious movements of serpents, the actions of dogs, monstrosities and birthmarks

¹ The hope that through excavations on the sites of ancient Babylonian cities extensive literary archives would be discovered in the temples has not been realized, and there are good grounds for questioning whether, with the exception of the Marduk temple in the city of Babylon, and perhaps also of the Nebo temple at Borsippa, the Babylonian temples possessed extensive literary archives. See the author's paper, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?" in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. xxvii. pp. 147–182.

among men and animals, and the inspection of the liver of animals offered up for sacrifice, — an enumeration that by itself illustrates the wide scope of the omen-texts.² Closely allied in spirit to the collection of omens, and only some degrees less extensive, were the incantation-texts.³ These were based on the endeavor to control, to invoke, and to exorcise powerful and, in general, evil-disposed spirits, and to heal disease, — believed to be due to the presence in the body of evil and unclean spirits, — by the use of certain formulæ together with purification rites in some form or other.⁴ By the observation and interpretation of omens it was hoped to forestall the future, while the incantations aimed at undoing mischief already wrought. With each of these two branches of the religious literature a genuine scientific discipline was entwined, — astronomy with the former, because of the supposed connection between phenomena in the heavens and occurrences on earth, and medicine with the latter, since as knowledge advanced, the beneficent qualities of certain herbs and concoctions were recognized as a valuable adjunct to the sacred formulæ. The incantations pass over almost imperceptibly into prayers and hymns. The appeal to the gods was through incantations, and although the power of the incantations was down to the latest days supposed to reside in the words themselves rather than in the sentiments conveyed through the words, the incantations finally took on the form of prayers. It is significant for the close connection between incantations and prayers that while in both earlier and later times prayers were produced independently of incantations, the technical term for incantation, *šiptu*, continued to cling to the prayers

² See chap. xx in the forthcoming parts of the author's *Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens* for a full exposition of omen-texts. This work will henceforth in this article be quoted briefly as *Jastrow*.

³ Weber (*Dämonenbeschwörung bei den Babyloniern und Assyriern*, Leipzig, 1906, p. 4) is of the opinion that the incantations form the most extensive branch of the religious literature of Babylonia and Assyria, but Bezold's index to the *Catalogue of the Kouyunjik Collection* decides the claim in favor of the omen-texts.

⁴ See *Jastrow*, chap. xvi, and Weber's capital sketch just referred to.

when combined with incantations, and it is also worthy of note that some of the finest prayers were embodied in incantations.⁵ The ritual texts deal chiefly with the ceremonies prescribed for purging oneself from sin or contamination through evil spirits.⁶ Rites were also prescribed in connection with the inspection of animals so as to secure the correct interpretation of the omens to be derived from the signs on the liver of the animals offered up, whether as daily offerings, or on festivals, or other special occasions.

All of these four subdivisions of the religious literature are closely bound up with the official cult as carried on in the Babylonian and Assyrian temples, and form an integral part of it. This official character is emphasized by the fact that the omens as interpreted bear largely on affairs of state or on the fate and welfare of the rulers and members of the royal household. The prayers likewise were composed in large degree for the king, upon whose well being and proper observance of necessary ceremonials the welfare of the entire country depended.⁷ The lay individual was, to be sure, not entirely overlooked in the incantations and omens, but his interests were made subsidiary to those of the ruler. If the gods were well-disposed towards the king, the subjects had little to fear from divine caprice, and while it may be that in the course of time it became common for individuals to repair to the temples to secure through the priests release from suffering, forgiveness of sins, or answers to inquiries by means of the omens gathered from the inspection of the liver of sacrificial animals, or guidance in the proper under-

⁵ Examples in King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*, especially nos. 1, 2, 27; IV R², pl. 17; 20, no. 2, etc. The fine penitential prayer to Ishtar published by King (*Seven Tablets of Creation*, i. pp. 222-237, and ii. pl. 75-84) is designated as a *šiptu*, as is also the impressive prayer to Shamash published by Craig, *Assyr. and Babyl. Religious Texts*, ii. pl. 3-5, etc. See also some of the hymns in the *šurpu* and *maklû* series of incantations, translations of which will be found in *Jastrow*, i. pp. 297, 306, 317, 321 ff., 332.

⁶ A good use of these ritual texts for the unfolding of the Babylonian doctrine of sin has been made by Julian Morgenstern in his monograph, *The Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion*, Berlin, 1905.

⁷ The position of the king in Babylonia fully bears out Frazer's theories embodied in his *Lectures on the Early History of Kingship*, London, 1905.

standing of more or less unusual happenings to individuals, yet in the official cult only restricted recognition was given to the demands and needs of the people. It was their function to provide through tithes and offerings the means for the sustenance of the priests, and, for the rest, to make the best terms that they could with the gods through unofficial relations with the priests.

The connection of the fifth subdivision of the religious literature—the myths and legends—with the official cult might at first sight appear less obvious, but the evidence is now accumulating that on stated occasions, such as New Year's Day, or on festival days in honor of the gods, in addition to sacrifices with purification to placate the gods or to forestall their displeasure, tales representing the more or less popular form given to old myths were recited, accompanied in some instances by dramatic representations.⁸ The festival legend, of which, as Haupt has recently shown,⁹ the Book of Esther furnishes a notable example in Biblical literature, can, indeed, be traced back to Babylonia. The main version of the Babylonian creation-story, celebrating in its present form¹⁰ the great deed of Marduk in vanquishing Tiamat, appears to have been written as part of the ritual for the New Year's festival,¹¹ which in Babylon was sacred to Marduk. By analogy we may be permitted to conclude that the other versions of the creation-story current in one or another of the religious centers of Babylonia represent the festival legends prescribed for occasions in the year sacred to other gods. Besides creation-myths proper, we have tales of Ninib, Bel, Ishtar, Sin, and Shamash that may in a general way be designated as nature-myths, symbolizing

⁸ See *Jastrow*, i. p. 465, and the reference there given to Zimmern, to whom the suggestion regarding the dramatic representation of myths is due. See also Weissbach, *Babylonische Miscellen*, p. 34.

⁹ "Purim" (Presidential address before the Society of Biblical Literature, Dec. 27, 1905), in *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, vi. 2. See esp. pp. 3, 21 ff.

¹⁰ See the writer's article, "The Composite Character of the Babylonian Creation Story," in the Nöldeke *Festschrift*, vol. ii. pp. 969-982.

¹¹ A further discussion of this view will be found in the forthcoming chap. xxiv of the writer's *Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*.

either the changes of season or other occurrences in nature, and it can, I think, be shown that these too were prepared for use in the cult on specific occasions.¹² It is not beyond the range of possibility that even the elaborate Gilgamesh epic was written for such a purely practical purpose, though it may be that this only applies to certain strata within that composite production. It is to be noted also that the myths and legends of Babylonia and Assyria may be said to have a doctrinal import (or *Tendenz*, to use the more expressive German term). The story of Marduk and Tiamat, apart from the underlying myth, illustrates the doctrine of the theologians of Babylon that the gods stand for law and order; the story of Ishtar's descent to the lower world and her escape shows the possibility of eluding the grasp of the powers presiding over the world of the dead, and thus fore-shadows, if it does not actually illustrate, the doctrine of a better fate for mankind than to be imprisoned in Aralu; the story of Ut-napishtim's rescue from the disastrous flood¹³ enforces the doctrine that under exceptional conditions even mortals can acquire the boon of immortality which is the prerogative of the gods; the apparition of the dead Eabani to Gilgamesh¹⁴ is made the medium for the teaching that proper care of the dead is essential to such comfort as is possible for these unfortunates in the dark cave, and so on.¹⁵ But over and above this doctrinal aim to be observed in these tales is their connection with the cult. In a religious system so complicated and in a cult so elaborate as the one unfolded and developed in the course of long ages in the Euphrates Valley, with its many sacred occasions,

¹² So, for example, the tale of Ishtar's descent into the nether world and her escape from that region (revised edition in *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*, part xv. pl. 45-47) was utilized for a Babylonian All Souls' Day, as already suggested by Jeremias, *Die Babylonisch-assyrischen Vorstellungen von dem Leben nach dem Tode*, pp. 7 ff.

¹³ Tablet 11 of the Gilgamesh Epic; see Jensen's translation, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vi. 1, pp. 228 ff.

¹⁴ Tablet 12; see Jensen, pp. 256 ff.

¹⁵ See Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1898, pp. 513 ff., 527, 551 f. Further illustrations in the forthcoming chap. xxvii of the author's *Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*.

its festivals and fasts, it is reasonable to suppose that the doctrine illustrated by any particular tale fitted in with the character that one or another of these sacred days had acquired. Its recitation would therefore form an appropriate feature of the ritual prescribed for the occasion in question. Without entering into further details, we may content ourselves here with the general conclusion that the myths and legends of Babylonia and Assyria, like the other divisions of the religious literature, stood in a direct and close relationship to the cult, and were — with perhaps some exceptions — composed with some practical purpose in view.

II

These preliminary remarks, illustrative of the practical purposes served by the religious literature of Babylonia and Assyria, will help us to an understanding of one of the most remarkable texts in Ashurbanapal's collection, which at first sight might appear to be a purely literary production independent of any purpose, but which upon closer study reveals itself as a didactic composition in which the story of a great sufferer is utilized for the elucidation of certain religious doctrines, and, incidentally, for the discussion of the same problem that confronts us in the Book of Job, to wit, the cause of the ills that human flesh is heir to. Moreover, the composition, closely allied as we shall see to a subdivision of the Babylonian hymnal literature, for which the term "lamentation songs" suggests itself as appropriate,¹⁶ and indeed based on such "lamentations," strikes one as having been set up for use in connection with an atonement ritual, or for a day of the year specially set aside for securing divine forgiveness for sins committed. Its place in the ritual would, on this supposition, form a close parallel to the usage in the early Jewish ritual which prescribed the reading of the Books of Esther, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes for Purim, the Passover, Pentecost, the Ninth Day of Ab, and the Ingathering Festival respectively, and would be a more remote parallel

¹⁶ See *Jastrow*, ii. p. 3.

to the custom of selecting for the Sabbath and festivals selections from the prophetic literature appropriate to the portion from the Pentateuch prescribed for each Sabbath in the year and for festival days. At all events, the didactic character of the composition warrants the conclusion that it was utilized in some way in connection with the ritual of the Babylonian temples, as were the festal legends and myths.

The text, at least in part, has been known for some time. A section of it was published in the first edition of *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. iv. 1875.¹⁷ A translation into Hebrew characters was given by Halévy a few years later,¹⁸ and Sayce in his Hibbert Lectures on the Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, which appeared in 1887, furnished a translation, placing the text among the "Litanies to the Gods."¹⁹ In a communication to the London *Academy* for Jan. 21, 1888, Pinches recognized the importance of the text, and was more successful than Sayce in a general account of its contents, but he likewise missed the point, as we shall see, in his view that it treats of a divine being "whose path was glorious and worth following," who is apparently spoken of as having lived in the world, died, and risen again — "a prototype of the Messiah." In the same year Evetts²⁰ published a duplicate copy of the text, also of the Kouyunjik collection, with twenty-one additional lines, but refrained from any translation, contenting himself with the statement that it "defies all attempts at interpretation." A third copy was subsequently found in Ashurbanapal's collection,²¹ and in the second edition of *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. iv. pl. 60*, all three copies (designated as A, B, and C) were published. The popularity which the

¹⁷ Pl. 67, no. 2 (K 3972).

¹⁸ *Documents religieux de l'Assyrie et de la Babylonie*, Paris, 1882, pp. 195-197.

¹⁹ *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, pp. 535-536. The translation is antiquated, and only a very few lines of it are correct.

²⁰ *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, x, p. 478, with two plates. The second copy bears the number K 2518.

²¹ D. T. 151.

text must have enjoyed is further attested by the discovery of a duplicate in neo-babylonian characters among the tablets found by Scheil in 1894 within the precincts of the temple of Shamash at Sippar,²² from which one may also conclude that the text was used in connection with the Shamash ritual as well as in the temple of Marduk at Babylon, from the archives of which presumably the three or four copies in Ashurbanapal's collection were taken.²³

Although Delitzsch utilized the text in the preparation of

²² Scheil, *Une saison de fouilles à Sippar*, Cairo, 1900, p. 105. Scheil merely gave a transliteration of seven lines of the tablet. In response to a request Dr. L. Messerschmidt of the Royal Museum of Berlin very kindly made for me, during his sojourn in Constantinople in the summer of 1906, a copy of the entire reverse of the fragment, which reached me Oct. 3, 1906. In all thirty-one lines—in part or entire—remain of the reverse, corresponding to lines 1-26 of the reverse of copy B, and including the colophon which furnishes the opening line of the third tablet. In addition, the fragment furnishes seven lines which are not included in B or C, but of which two appear in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 53-54), so that the fragment furnishes us with five entirely new lines of the second tablet, which in B and C presumably belonged to the obverse. The division of lines in the Sippar fragment differs in several instances from B and C, which fact, together with the circumstance that the fragment contains a number of interesting variant readings, shows that the fragment reverts to a different original from the one after which the copies in Ashurbanapal's library were made,—unless indeed we are to assume that the Babylonian and Assyrian scribes in preparing their copies permitted themselves variations from their prototypes. This last supposition is not impossible, especially if in making the copies the original was read aloud to the scribe who wrote; but definite proof for it is not forthcoming, and it is for the present safer to assume different originals for variant copies. Dr. Messerschmidt, to whom I am under deep obligations, proposes to publish his copy of the fragment, which is a valuable aid in the study of the text. According to Dr. Messerschmidt only a few signs were legible on the obverse, and he was unable to find any correspondence between these and the obverse of copy A, B, or C. However, such correspondence in all probability exists, unless—what is most unlikely—the obverse of the Sippar fragment contains a part of the text belonging to the first tablet according to the Assyrian copies. Since only a few signs of the obverse of the fragment are to be seen, it is perhaps not surprising that a definite correspondence with A, B, or C could not be recognized by Dr. Messerschmidt.

²³ Two further fragments are registered by Bezold in his *Catalogue*, p. 450 (D.T. 358 and Sm. 1745), which, according to a collation kindly made for me by Mr. L. W. King, are duplicates of lines on the obverse of the

his *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*, and incidentally translated a number of lines from it, the credit of furnishing the first connected translation belongs to Zimmern, who included it in the specimens of the Babylonian-Assyrian literature in the second volume of *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (3d ed.), pp. 385-387. Zimmern introduces the translation in illustration of a suggestion thrown out by him that the prototype of the suffering "servant of the Lord" (*Ebed Jahveh*) of the Old Testament was to be found in Babylonian literature.²⁴ More recently he has published a somewhat modified translation,²⁵ laying stress this time on the fact that the lament of a sufferer constitutes the main theme of the text. Zimmern, however, fails to recognize that our text is only a part of a more extensive production, and through this failure misses both in his earlier and later version what I believe to be the correct interpretation. Two²⁶ of the three copies in the Kouyunjik collection contain a colophon which informs us that the text forms the second tablet of a series beginning:

I will praise the lord of wisdom,²⁷

second tablet, the former joining on to B (K 2518), and furnishing ten lines that agree with C (K 3972), obv. 19-28, with two slight variations, the latter a duplicate of obv. 3-9 of B, agreeing with this text, where B differs from A (D.T. 151). Of text A, it may be added, only eleven lines of the obverse are preserved, whereas of the reverse nothing remains beyond five lines of the colophon. Sm. 1745 may therefore represent a fourth copy. But it may also be a portion of C, since of this text twenty lines at the beginning are wanting, including all those embodied in Sm. 1745.

²⁴ *Keilinschriften* ³, ii. p. 384.

²⁵ *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete in Auswahl*, Leipzig, 1905, pp. 27-31. It may be as well to add that my version of the text as given in the 9th part of *Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, ii. pp. 120-133 (including portions not included by Zimmern in his first translation) was printed before Zimmern's second translation reached me.

²⁶ B (K 2518) and C (K 3972), though the former preserves only the beginning of the line in question (B rev. 27 = C. rev. 25).

²⁷ [lud]-lul bēl ni-me-ki. See the interesting list, or catalogue, of texts, Rm 618, of which Bezold gives an extract in his *Catalogue*, p. 1627, and which mentions (l. 18) our series **mu-kal-lim-tu ša lud-lul bēl ni-me-ki**, i.e. extract of the series "I will praise the lord of wisdom"—incidentally another proof for both the existence and the popularity of the production in question.

and the opening line of the following tablet is also indicated as follows :

The pressure of his hands I can no longer endure.²⁸

This of itself would not necessarily prove a continuous text, for in Reisner's collection of *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen*, Berlin, 1896, which are in the main "lamentation songs," colophons, though as we shall presently see of a somewhat different kind, are attached to tablets of a series representing originally independent compositions pieced together. Zimmern, in fact, regards our text as one of such a group of independent "lamentation songs," but a careful study of a most valuable commentary to the text which we are fortunate enough to possess among the tablets of Ashurbanapal's library,²⁹ furnishes the proof that the second tablet is not to be classed among "lamentation songs" (though modeled on them), and that it is actually part of a *continuous* composition. This enables us to determine approximately the probable extent of the composition, and to reconstruct it in its general outlines. This commentary, prepared for the guidance of the young aspirants to the priesthood in the temple school at Babylon³⁰ (or elsewhere), was noticed by Evetts,³¹ and is utilized by Zimmern in his two translations. It forms, indeed, an invaluable aid to our text, for it furnishes

²⁸ *kab-ta-at kâtâ-su ul a-li'i na-ša-ša* (C rev. 24), of which the first two syllables are preserved in B rev. 26. In the Sippar fragment *su* (of *kâtâ* or [*kât*]-*su*) and traces of the following *ul* are to be seen. The colophon in B is much longer than that in C, and also informs us that the tablet was copied from Assyrian and Babylonian copies (*gabri Ašur u Akkad*), a valuable indication that the scribes of Ashurbanapal made copies from existing Assyrian copies, and not merely from Babylonian originals. On other occurrences of this phrase, see the writer's paper, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?," *JAOS*, xxvii. p. 178, note 1.

²⁹ V Rawlinson, pl. 47.

³⁰ See the writer's paper, "Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?," *JAOS*, xxvii. p. 169. Numerous commentaries of this kind are found in the Kouyunjik collection, showing that the Assyrian scribes obtained their knowledge of Babylonian literature largely from copies prepared for, or kept in, the temple schools. See King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, vol. i. appendix, pp. 157-169, for a discussion and utilization of such school commentaries to the creation-story.

³¹ *Proc. Soc. of Bibl. Arch.* x. p. 478.

explanations of difficult words by giving others in common use, and, incidentally, since the entire line of the text is generally given from which a particular word (or more than one) is singled out for explanation,³² provides an aid to the determination and in some cases to the restoration of the text.

The second tablet, though on the whole well preserved, is unfortunately somewhat defective at the top of the obverse and end of the reverse. The commentary to the second tablet of our series is represented by lines 34 obv. to 3 rev., *i.e.* by 31 lines. By combining two of the copies of the second tablet — B and C — in connection with the fragment from Sippar and the commentary, we can estimate the length of the tablet at about 120 lines.³³ The first thirty lines of the obverse of the commentary cover therefore the first tablet, and assuming the proportion of text to commentary to have been about the same, we should similarly have about 120 lines as the length of the first tablet. This result is in accord with the general observation to be made that in the case of a text consisting of a series of tablets, the various tablets are of about the same length.³⁴

³² As an illustration of the commentary the explanation of the third line of the second tablet may be chosen, where, after the entire line is repeated, the first word **ša-bur-tum** is explained by what was apparently a more common term, **ru-ub-tum** "distress." (V Rawlinson, pl. 47, obv. 35.)

³³ Texts B and C in combination give 74 lines, the Sippar fragment 7 additional lines, and the commentary 5 lines not contained in B, C, or the Sippar fragment, making a total of 86, to which we are justified in adding 34 lines, since the lines of the commentary are as a general rule not continuous. So, for instance, between line 54 obv. of the commentary and line 56, representing the next line of the text to be commented on, there are five lines, as the Sippar fragment shows. This is below rather than above the average (*e.g.* between lines 43 and 44 obv. there intervene no less than 18 lines), so that a proportion of 34 lines of text to 5 lines of commentary is none too much. Of the 74 lines of B and C only 8 lines are commented upon — a proportion of about 1 to 9. For 5 lines this would be 45 lines. Adding this number to 81 (74 of B and C and 7 of the Sippar fragment), we obtain 126 lines as the length of the second tablet, so that 120 may be regarded as a safe minimum. Copy A need not enter into our calculations, since it preserves only 11 lines of the obverse, embodied in B.

³⁴ Thus, for instance, the seven tablets of the main version of the Babylonian creation-story are of about the same length, the longest being 146 lines, the shortest 138 lines.

To continue our calculations, line 4 rev. of the commentary represents the opening line of the third tablet, as is shown by a comparison with the colophons attached to B, C, and the Sippar fragment.⁸⁵ Proceeding on the assumption, which appears now to be perfectly safe, that all the tablets of our series were of about the same length, the remaining 61 lines of the commentary would correspond to two tablets, which would give us therefore for the whole series—assuming, as we have a right to do, that the commentary consists of this one tablet only—four tablets of about 120 lines each, or 480 lines in all—a production of considerable extent as literary works in Babylonia and Assyria go. While the estimate for the total number of lines can in the nature of the case be only approximate,⁸⁶ the result of this calculation, so far as it relates to the number of tablets of which the series consisted, may be regarded as trustworthy.

⁸⁵ In text B the first word only of the opening line of the third tablet is preserved, but in C the entire line, which agrees with the text in the commentary except for two slight variations: (*a*) *ḫâtâ* (dual) in C, as against *ḫâtu* (sing.), (*b*) *a-li-i* in C as against *a-li-i*. These are, however, important, as showing that the text upon which the commentary was based differed from C. There are various other similar slight variations from the copies in the commentary, pointing to an original which agreed with B rather than with C, or which may represent a fourth (or fifth) independent copy.

⁸⁶ This for two reasons: (1) The commentary occasionally comments on several continuous lines of the second tablet, and even in other portions the lines in the commentary (*e.g.* obv. 31–32) are continuous, so that only an average can be struck of the proportion between commentary and text. (2) While the commentary generally gives the text in one line and the comment in the following, very often text and comment are given in one and the same line, making it more difficult to secure more than an approximate average. Thus of 20 lines of the second tablet (or about one-sixth of the entire tablet) which are represented in the commentary, in 11 instances the comment appears in the same line as the text and in 9 in the following line, by means of which we get the 31 lines in question. This proportion does not in fact hold good for the rest of the commentary, so far as preserved, since of the remaining *circa* 49 lines distinguishable, 18 contain the comment and text in the same line. The result one way or the other, however, would not give us enough lines for a fifth tablet, but merely enough to make a difference of a few lines in the length of one or the other of the four tablets.

That these four tablets embody a single continuous composition, and not, as Zimmern³⁷ assumes, a collection of several independent texts, follows from a careful study of the indications in the lines quoted in the commentary as compared with the text of the second tablet. The colophon, with its catch line taken from the beginning of the first tablet,³⁸ already points in this direction. Collections of independent texts are marked in a different way. So, for example, the tablets of the texts published by Reisner under the title of *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen*,³⁹ which for the most part belong to series that represent larger or smaller collections of originally independent "lamentation songs," are not enumerated according to the opening line of the first tablet, but are grouped together according to certain catch-words, indicating either the subdivision of lamentation songs to which they belong or the main theme introduced; ⁴⁰ and although these texts in the form in which we have them represent copies prepared by temple pupils, we may feel certain that the method employed is in accord with established literary canons. Besides this external agreement, we have also confirmatory internal evidence that the tablets of this series must be taken together as constituting the parts of a single composition. Thus a description in the first tablet⁴¹ of the manner in which by divine punishment the ears of the suffering individual were closed up, corresponds to a description in the third tablet of the restoration of

³⁷ See above, p. 144.

³⁸ *duppu šanû [luḍ]-lul bêl ni-me-ki*, i.e. second tablet of "I will praise the lord of wisdom." See above, p. 143.

³⁹ See above, p. 144.

⁴⁰ See Reisner's Introduction, especially pp. xvii ff.; his discussion of the colophons attached to his texts still leaves a number of important problems open.

⁴¹ V R 47, obv. 22, which can be restored as follows:

[uznâ ša uṭṭamema us-sak]-ka-ra ḥa-šik-kiš e-me.

The restoration is suggested by a comparison with rev. 9, a line belonging to the third tablet:

uzna-a-a ša uṭ-ṭam-me-ma us-sak-ki-ra ḥa-šik-kiš

My ears he closed up, bolting them as a deaf man's.

hearing through the response of the god appealed to for relief. Again, the complaint which fills the second tablet is manifestly put into the mouth of a ruler, as is shown by a reference therein to subjects, to the palace, and to royal authority.⁴² Corresponding to this the sufferer speaks of himself in a line preserved in the commentary from the first tablet as a king,⁴³ and similarly in the third tablet he is spoken of as "the strong ruler decked with the turban."⁴⁴ Furthermore, the account in the third and fourth tablets celebrating the release from sufferings endured directly, recalls at various points the description of these sufferings in the first and second tablets,⁴⁵ and in such a manner as to fortify the conclusion that the same sufferer is referred to throughout.

III

When we come to the composition itself, it is possible with the help of the commentary to supplement the preserved second tablet to the extent of restoring the general course of the narrative embodied in the composition. The suggestion has already been thrown out that the main per-

⁴² IV R 60*, B obv. 29-32 where we encounter *mâtia* "my land," *nišê-ia* "my people," *šarru* "king," and *pulahtu êkalli ummân ušalmid* "the fear of the palace I taught the people."

⁴³ V R 47, obv. 24, *šar-ra ki-ma a-tur a-na re-e-ši* "from a king I became, as it were, a slave."

⁴⁴ V R 47, rev. 7, *id-lu dan-nu a-pir a-ga-šu*.

⁴⁵ Thus, for instance, a reference in the second tablet to the sufferer's "having been thrown on his back" (V R 47, obv. 49, *u-ram-mu-u ki-ša-du*) and "bent like a reed" (l. 50 *ur-ba-ti-iš uš-ni-il-lum*) corresponds to his thanksgiving in the third tablet (V R 47, rev. 18, *a-ma-liš iz-ḫup*) for having been made "erect like a cedar," and again, corresponding to the account of his helpless hands as "fetters for his body" (IV R 60*, B rev. 1, *il-lu-ur-tum še-rî-ia na-da-a i-da-a-a*), we find in the description of the release "the bonds enclosing me like a lock he opened" (V R 47, rev. 13, *la-ga-a-a ša i-sir i-dil-tas ip-ti*). Complaining in the second tablet that "for lack of nourishment he was tortured with pangs of hunger" (Sippar fragment, l. 3, *i-na [la] ma-ka-li e-šu(?) bu-bu-u[tu]*) we have in the third tablet "the one oppressed with hunger he made like a strong and solid sprout" (V R 47, rev. 14, *u-ma-ḫu ša ina un-ṣi it-tar-ru-u ki-ma pi-ir an-ni-ni rak-su*. For *an-ni-ni* = "strong," see Meissner, *Supplement*, p. 12. Compare also the above-mentioned corresponding passages, p. 147, note 41, etc.

sonage in this narrative is a ruler. It is he who is introduced in the second tablet as pouring forth a lament over the tortures that have been heaped upon him. A line from the third tablet preserved in the commentary⁴⁶ reveals to us the name of the royal sufferer as Tâbi-utul-Bêl, and he is there described as "dwelling in Nippur." This personage, by a fortunate chance, occurs again in an important list of names, which confirms the view that he was a king who ruled in Nippur. The list in question,⁴⁷ while mainly drawn up for the purpose of furnishing explanations of proper names, by giving either (*a*) the phonetic transliteration of the ideographs employed in the writing of names,⁴⁸ or (*b*) in other cases the meanings of names written phonetically,⁴⁹ or again (*c*) merely simpler and more intelligible methods of writing certain names,⁵⁰ includes, as a matter of course, many names of kings. The first section in fact is taken up entirely with royal names, as is shown by the note at the end of this section, which reads: "These are the kings who ruled after the deluge, though not arranged in the proper order."⁵¹ The second section begins with Hammu-

⁴⁶ V R 47, rev. 5. The line reads **LAL.UR.ELIM** (ma) a-šib En-lil(**ki**). The commentary furnishes the phonetic reading of the first three signs, as **Ta-a-bi u-tu-ul** (il) **Bêl**, *i.e.* therefore "Tâbi-utul-Bêl, dwelling in Nippur." The name Nippur is written as usual "Place [or district] of the god En-lil" (the chief god of Nippur).

⁴⁷ V R 44 (duplicate of II R 65, No. 2). See Pinches, *Proceed. Soc. Bibl. Arch.* iii. pp. 37 f., and further references in Bezold's *Catalogue of the Kouyunjik Collection*, p. 631.

⁴⁸ So in the majority of names in col. ii, except that the divine elements in the names are not phonetically transliterated, but replaced by the more common ideographs.

⁴⁹ This is the case with many of the names in col. i. 21, *e.g.* **Ha-am-mu-ra-bi** is explained as **kim-ta ra-pa-aš-tum** "extensive family." Such more or less fanciful explanations are valuable chiefly as illustrating the etymological science of the times.

⁵⁰ So in cols. ii and iii rarer forms of the names of well-known gods, as Bau, Gula, Marduk, Nusku, etc., are replaced by the commonly used forms, and, similarly, less known ideographs for other elements in the names by more common ones, or by a phonetic transliteration.

⁵¹ **a-na sa-dir a-ḥa-meš la šaṭ-ru**, literally "in order together not written," *i.e.* written without reference to their proper order, which would therefore imply omissions as well as rearrangement.

rabi, and contains Cassite rulers well known to us, like Kurigalzu, Meli-šipak, Burnaburiaš, etc., whose phonetically written names are interpreted in the adjoining column in accord with the accepted etymologies of the day. While, as we know from chronological lists and other sources, many royal names are omitted, and there is in fact no strict chronological order in the grouping of names, it would appear that the learned scribe who drew up this list, prepared evidently for purposes of instruction in the temple schools, was guided in part at least by chronicles from which he selected such royal names as appeared to him to require comment or explanation. The text may therefore be designated as in part a commentary to a chronological list of rulers and in part, in so far as other than royal names are included, a commentary to proper names in general, intended to explain names that a scribe would come across in drawing up or reading business and legal documents. Among the names thus introduced, which for the most part represent such as occur in the older periods of Babylonian history, is **LAL.UR.ELIM** (ma),⁵² as in our text, which, being phonetically transliterated as **Tâbi-ut-li**⁵³ **Bêl**,⁵⁴ makes the correspondence with the line in the commentary complete. Hommel⁵⁵ recognized the identity, and though he speaks of **Tâbi-utul-Bêl** as a "legendary" king of Nippur, he nevertheless regards him as an historical personage, nor is there any reason for doubting that the narrative embodied in our composition rests on some historical basis.

Hommel makes the interesting suggestion that **Tâbi-utul-Bêl** may be the one referred to in a text first published by Strong,⁵⁶ in which various successful exploits are referred

⁵² V R 44, col. ii. 17. All four signs as in V R 47, rev. 5, except that in the case of the third sign (Brünnow, No. 8883) the three independent signs of which it is composed are written consecutively instead of being combined into one.

⁵³ **ut-li** = **u-tul** (V R 47, rev. 5).

⁵⁴ Written (**il**) **En-lil** = (**il**) **Bêl** (V R 47, rev. 5).

⁵⁵ *Grundriss der Geog. und Gesch. d. Alten Orients*², p. 251, note 3, and p. 351.

⁵⁶ *Babyl. and Oriental Record*, vol. vi. No. 1; also by Winckler in his *Sammlung von Keilschrifttexten*, ii. p. 73.

to. One gains the impression from our narrative that Tâbi-utul-Bêl must indeed have been a ruler of a large domain and wide renown, and that for this reason the humiliation and suffering to which he was subjected in old age was the more impressive, — so impressive in fact as to be made the medium for conveying a religious lesson to future generations. For determining the age of Tâbi-utul-Bêl we have no data at our disposal. No doubt he belonged to a very ancient time, certainly long before Hammurabi, and when Nippur was still the center of an independent kingdom. To place him in the “legendary prehistoric” days, as Hommel proposes, is merely another way of saying that he belongs to a time for which as yet we have no data.

If we had at our disposal only the second tablet, which is taken up, as already indicated, with a long and detailed complaint, placed in the mouth of a royal sufferer, it would be natural to regard the composition as belonging to the lamentation songs (*Klagelieder*), of which we now have a large number,⁵⁷ and which, as has been shown elsewhere,⁵⁸ have certain distinct features, justifying us in placing such songs in a category by themselves as a subdivision of the Babylonian prayers and hymns. Such lamentations, composed originally on occasions of public catastrophes like the invasion of an enemy or a disastrous storm resulting in general havoc or bad crops, were in time extended to occasions of private grief and distress, though even when so applied the originally public character of this class of compositions is to be seen in the large part which the misfortunes of rulers, upon whose welfare that of the country was dependent, play in them. All misfortunes being due to the displeasure of some god or group of gods, a public catastrophe was a proof of divine anger against the whole country, while in the case of some misfortune which affected the ruler or a member of the royal house, it was likewise the divine displeasure, manifesting itself in this way against

⁵⁷ See *Jastrow*, ii. chap. xviii, where numerous specimens will be found.

⁵⁸ *Jastrow*, ii. pp. 7 f., where the reasons are also stated against regarding such compositions as “penitential psalms,” as has hitherto been done.

the country, on the theory that the rulers stood nearer to the gods than the common people, so that the entire country suffered if some deity was wroth with a ruler or with a member of the ruling house.

The two classes of lamentation songs thus resulting, those of a public and those of a private character, represent merely two phases of the same underlying circumstance, the anger of a deity against his land and his people. It was natural that in these lamentation songs, next to the lament over the disaster that had befallen the country or the royal house, the sense of guilt should be emphasized, and that, as the personal note became more distinct, the confession of sin on the part of the ruler should become as prominent an element as the lament in these compositions. A further step in the development of the lamentation songs is represented by compositions in which the ordinary individual pours forth his grief before some offended god or goddess. We have some specimens of such private and unofficial lamentations, and in these the confession of sin becomes the predominating theme. The so-called "penitential psalms"—a misnomer, so far as Babylonian literature is concerned, that ought to be abandoned—fall within this category, though it should be noted that some of the productions hitherto classed among "penitential psalms" represent lamentations of rulers rather than of ordinary individuals, and therefore belong to the official lamentation songs in which the welfare of the country is the determining factor. We have accordingly three kinds of lamentation songs in Babylonian literature, two of which partake of an official character and are distinguished from each other in that one is concerned with public catastrophes, the other with the private misfortunes of rulers, which, however, affect the general public welfare. The third kind is represented by the lamentation songs of a strictly personal character, occasioned by a grief or ill that has overtaken an individual and afflicts him and his circle alone. This class has, however, one important feature in common with the second, inasmuch as in both the confession of personal misdoings is most prominently introduced as a

means of arousing the compassion of the angered deity. Nevertheless our text, even on a superficial survey, differs in one essential particular from the ordinary laments with the confession of guilt on the part of a suffering ruler or of an ordinary individual afflicted by some sorrow; for while in some of these compositions the lament is accompanied by reflections on the nature of men and the way of the world, such reflections are brief,⁵⁹ being confined to two or three lines, and therefore merely incidental, whereas in our text the reflections assume a prominence which proves them to be as essential an element in the composition as the lament itself. Again, whereas the confession of guilt, more or less elaborate, is directly introduced in the ordinary lamentation songs, in our text such a confession is rather implicit and indirect. All this suggests the conclusion that whereas the second tablet of the series is based upon the custom of composing lamentations in times of distress, and, being modeled upon such productions, assumes their existence, it is not a lamentation song, but merely uses this species of literary composition as a point of departure for enlarging upon the doctrine of human suffering. In other words, the composition is didactic in purpose, and the situation unfolded in it, while in accord with that which underlies the lamentation

⁵⁹ Thus in a lament spoken by a priest on behalf of a sufferer we read (*Jastrow*, ii. p. 88) :

What power has a servant, the creature of thy hands?
 What can he decide? What is his strength?
 What can a servant do who fears his god?
 What can a maid give to her god?

or again (ii. p. 90) :

Who among all of mankind
 Understands my condition?
 Who has not sinned, who not transgressed?
 Who understands the ways of a god?

or (ii. p. 104) :

Mankind is deaf and void of wisdom.
 Among all mankind, who knows anything?
 Whether they act ill or well, no one is wise.

But immediately upon such brief reflections the laments and appeals for help are resumed.

songs, is merely seized upon as an appropriate background or framework for the main theme of the production, which is none other than the one confronting us in the Biblical Book of Job—the problem of suffering. This conclusion, suggested by a careful consideration of the distinctive features in the second tablet, is borne out and further illustrated by the lines from the other tablets as preserved in the commentary.

The opening line of the first tablet: ⁶⁰

I will praise the lord of wisdom,

shows that the composition began with the praise of some god. Ṭābi-utul-Bêl being from Nippur, to which besides the direct statement,⁶¹ the element Bêl⁶² points, the “lord of wisdom” can hardly be any one else than the god Bêl. Since, however, in one of the closing lines of the last tablet the god Marduk is introduced,⁶³ we have also the proof that, as in the case of so many other compositions of ancient Babylonia, a process of reëditing has taken place, undertaken by the priests of Marduk, who after Marduk as the chief god of Babylon—the political center in the period subsequent to Hammurabi—had been advanced to the head of the pantheon, transferred the homage formerly given to Bêl of Nippur to their favorite.⁶⁴ In accord with this policy, consistently and steadily carried out, hymns and rituals originally designed for Bêl were adapted to the cult of Marduk. The text, therefore, from which the scribes of Ashurbanapal

⁶⁰ See above, p. 143.

⁶¹ See above, p. 149, note 46.

⁶² Written, as will be recalled, **En-lil** in V R 47, rev. 5.

⁶³ V R 47, rev. 42.

⁶⁴ So *e.g.* almost the entire collection of lamentation songs published by Reisner are originally compositions in honor of Bêl for the cult at Nippur, but transferred to Marduk. See *Jastrow*, ii. pp. 11 f., 19 f., 29, etc. Examples of other hymns and prayers transferred to Marduk will be found in *Jastrow*, i. pp. 496, 503–506. The main version of the Babylonian creation-story is likewise a paean in honor of Bêl of Nippur, which was transferred (together with an Eridu version celebrating Ea as the conqueror of Tiamat) to Marduk. See the writer's article on “The Composite Character of the Babylonian Creation-Story,” in the Nöldeke *Festschrift*, pp. 971 ff., and “Did the Babylonian Temples have Libraries?” *JAOS*, xxvii. pp. 172 ff.

made their copies for the royal library at Nineveh was not the original Nippur version, but the later form given to the composition by the priests of Marduk, and we may, therefore, safely conclude that in this Babylon version the "lord of wisdom," whose praises are sung at the beginning of the text, was taken to mean Marduk, to whom in fact the attribute of wisdom is frequently accorded in hymns and other texts. In this transfer of homage from Bêl to Marduk, we have also a valuable index for the age of the composition. It belongs, as does the narrative, to the period before Babylon's rise to greatness, that is, before the days of Hammurabi, who is now placed approximately at 2250 B.C., whereas the Babylon version must of course date from a subsequent period, — how much after Hammurabi, however, we have no means at present of determining.

Taking the earlier and original version as our basis, it appears, therefore, that the text began with a pæan in honor of Bêl, and the portion of the first tablet preserved through the commentary is sufficient to show that the god was praised for release from suffering.⁶⁵ After this thanksgiving prayer, placed in the mouth of the one who was saved from death, the text proceeds with a description of the sufferings endured. The second tablet, continuing this general theme, opens with a graphic account of the hopelessness of the condition of the sufferer, who applies in vain from one class of priests to the other in his quest for relief. The sufferer is then led to philosophical reflections regarding the nature of evil, man's ever-changeable fate, his own weakness, and allied thoughts. This elaborate discourse constitutes the characteristic feature of our text which — to emphasize the important point again — differentiates it sharply from an ordinary lamentation song. After indulging in these reflections, another and even more elaborate description of the sufferings endured by Tâbi-utul-Bêl follows, and with

⁶⁵ A line ending with **ta-ra-nu** (l. 17) explained as **šil-lu** "protection" and the following ending in **a-tam-maḥ** "[the staff of thy divinity (?)] I seize hold of" point in this direction, as do the following ones, which are better preserved.

the longing for release through death as his only hope, the second tablet closes.

The third tablet opens again with a note of despair, suggesting that Tâbi-utul-Bêl may even have contemplated self-destruction, which Job's wife suggested to her tortured husband. Up to this point the sufferer himself is the speaker. At this point, however, the narrator steps forward, revealing the name of the sufferer, and after the statement that Tâbi-utul-Bêl prayed to his god with a confession of his sins, the description of the release is given by Tâbi-utul-Bêl, — a description quite as elaborate as the account of his sufferings in the first and second tablets. This description apparently extends into the fourth tablet, though we have no means of determining exactly where this third tablet ends and the last begins; and since the commentary is also defective at the close, we are left to conjecture as to the manner in which the text came to an end. If a conclusion from analogous compositions (such as the Babylonian creation-story, which, like our text, is a didactic tale with a moral illustrative of certain doctrinal teachings) be permitted, it is the author of the composition as the narrator who again steps forward at the close to exhort all who would gain the favor and protection of the gods to pray without ceasing, to acknowledge the strength and power of the gods, and to profit by the example of Tâbi-utul-Bêl in maintaining a proper attitude of humility through a recognition of the weakness and sinfulness of man.

IV

We are now prepared to turn to the text itself. Of the first tablet only six lines are fully preserved in the commentary, but three more which are partially preserved can be restored, and the closing word of two lines can be determined.⁶⁶ These lines are as follows:

⁶⁶ In all, 23 lines of the commentary belonging to the first tablet are preserved, but since at least 7 of these are taken up with the explanatory portion, there remain only 16 lines, and of these, 4 show only the last sign or two, and a fifth is too defective to furnish any sense.

. protection⁶⁷
 [The staff of thy divinity?] I seize hold of⁶⁸

These two lines still belong to the praise of Bêl. With the next line preserved, we are already in the midst of the description of the sufferings of Tâbi-utul-Bêl. Bearing in mind that we have no means of definitely determining exactly how many lines are missing between those preserved, the sufferer thus portrays his sad plight:

[Mine eyes he closed, bolting them as with] a lock,⁶⁹
 [Mine ears he bolted]⁷⁰ like those of a deaf person;
 A king — I have been changed into a slave.⁷¹
 A madman⁷² — my companions became estranged from me.

In the midst (?) of the assembly, they spurned me . . .⁷³

⁶⁷ **ta-ra-nu** explained as **šil-lu** "protection."

⁶⁸ **a-tam-maḥ**, explained in the next line, [**a-ta-**]**ma-ḥu** = **ša-ba-tum** "to seize." The restoration here suggested on the basis of a passage like the following in a lamentation of Ashurnasirpal II (c. 1100 B.C.) **ša-bit ḫa-ni ilu-ti-ki** "taking hold of the staff of thy divinity" (Brünnow, *Zeitschr. f. Assyriol.* v. p. 68. See also *Jastrow*, ii. p. 112.

⁶⁹ Of this line only a portion of the verb and the word **êli-ia** "against me" remain, but through the commentary (in the following line, V R 47, obv. 21) another word of the line **nap-ra-ku**, explained as **pi-ir-ku** "bolt," is obtained. The restoration, while partly conjectural, may be regarded as safe so far as the general meaning is concerned. Since the following line speaks of the closing up of his ears, it is reasonable to expect this one to refer to the loss of his eyesight.

⁷⁰ Read [**uzna-a-a u-sak-ki**]-**ra ḫa-šik-kiš e-me**, corresponding to **uzna-a-a uṭ-ṭam-me-ma us-sak-ki-ra ḫa-šik-kiš** in the third tablet (V R 47, rev. 9). "Mine ears which he had stopped up, were bolted like a deaf person's."

⁷¹ **re-e-ši**, explained as **LU + URU** = **ardu**, the common sign for "servant" (Brünnow, *Classified List*, No. 956). The word **rêšu** is therefore to be connected with the Hebrew עָשָׂה "poor," the correspondence between the Assyrian and Hebrew being the same as **rêšu** "head" and עָשָׂה.

⁷² **na-al-bu-bu**, explained as **še-gu-u** "mad." **nalbubu**, from **libbu** "heart," "intellect," would be either the one "endowed with intellect," used euphemistically to express just the reverse, or in a privative sense "the one deprived of intellect."

⁷³ A difficult line, and, moreover, imperfectly preserved. At the beginning **ina ḫa-aš pu-uḥ-ri** appears to have some such force as "in the midst of the assembly," though this is far from certain. Preceding this line there are two others, — one perhaps representing a "comment" line, — which are too mutilated to permit of any attempt at a restoration.

At the mention (?) of my piety⁷⁴ . . . terror.⁷⁵
 By day — deep sighs, at night — weeping;
 The month — cries, the year — distress.

These last two lines are evidently continuous. They are quite in the style of the lamentation songs, and recall a passage in the lament of a ruler addressed to the goddess Ishtar : ⁷⁶

I experience, O my mistress, mournful days, distress-
 ful months, years of misery.

It is quite possible that they form the closing lines of the first tablet, since with the following line of the commentary we reach the second tablet, which, while continuing the general lament, reveals through its elaborate philosophical reflections the distinctively didactic nature of the composition. The tablet begins with a sentiment that recalls the refrain in the Book of Ecclesiastes:

I had reached and passed the allotted time of life;⁷⁷
 Whithersoever I turned — evil upon evil.⁷⁸
 Misery⁷⁹ had increased, happiness had disappeared,

⁷⁴ **a-na ḫa-ab damḫut-ia.**

⁷⁵ **ḥaš-tum** explained in the commentary **ḥa-aš-tum = šu-[ut-tum]**. Cf. V R 28, No. 1, obv. 32, *a-b*; for the meaning, see Muss-Arnolt, *Am. Journal of Semitic Languages*, xxii. p. 227. The preceding word **pi-ta-as-su** is obscure. A somewhat similar passage occurs in a prayer to Bêlit, published by Scheil, *Zeitschr. f. Assyr.* x. p. 22 (line 62), on which see Meissner, *Supplement zu den Assyr. Wörterbüchern*, p. 79 b.

⁷⁶ King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, i. p. 232 (line 72). Similarly, in other laments:

In distressful lament and sorrow,
 He moans like a dove night and day (*Jastrow*, ii. p. 89);
 My eye is full of tears,
 On my couch I sigh,
 Weeping and sighing have prostrated me (*ib.* p. 85).

⁷⁷ More literally, "I reached up (in) life, I passed beyond the limit." In the phrase **akšud-ma a-na ba-laṭ a-dan-na i-ti-iḫ**, the word **balātu** means "the span of life," and **adannu** "the fixed time."

⁷⁸ Text: **limuttim, limuttim** "evil, evil," a phrase therefore like the refrain **הַיָּלָה הַיָּלָה** in Ecclesiastes.

⁷⁹ **ṣa-bur-tum**, explained in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 35) as **ru-ub-tum**, a very strong term for 'distress.'

I cried to the god,⁸⁰ but he did not show me his countenance;

I prayed to the goddess,⁸¹ but she did not raise her head.
The **bârû**-priest⁸² could not determine the future by an inspection,⁸³

The **šâ'ilu**-priest⁸⁴ did not by an offering⁸⁵ justify my suit,

The **zakiku**-priest⁸⁶ I appealed to, but he revealed nothing,

⁸⁰ Throughout the text **ilu** without further qualification is used for "god" and **iš-ta-ru** for "goddess." The reference is, of course, to Bêl and Bêlit of Nippur or, in the reëdited form, to Marduk and Sarpanit. The usage is interesting as illustrating the preëminent position accorded in a religious center to the chief god and his consort, to the extent of making them the deities *par excellence*. The so-called "monotheistic tendency" in the Babylonian religion is directly connected with this peculiar point of view, which, while recognizing entire groups of deities and spirits of various degrees of power, relegates them to such an insignificant place by the side of the chief pair as to give the impression that the latter were regarded as the only ones.

⁸¹ **iš-ta-ri**; see the previous note.

⁸² The **bârû**, literally "seer," or "inspector," is primarily the one who through the inspection of the liver of the sacrificial animal divines from the signs noted on the liver what the future will bring, but the term is extended to include the one who ascertains the will and intention of the gods in other ways, as through the reading of the signs in the heavens, through the interpretation of dreams, or through an oracle obtained in a more direct manner. See Zimmern, *Beiträge*, pp. 82-91, whose views can now be supplemented by later researches, for which the reader is referred to *Jastrow*, ii. pp. 192-195, 205-208.

⁸³ **ina bi-ir** "through the inspection," the reference being to the examination of the liver as the primary organ of divination. The use of the construct form of the noun (without case-ending) for the absolute is a characteristic feature of this text. So, for example, in the first line of the second tablet we have **ana balât** for **balâti**.

⁸⁴ Written **EN.ME.LI** "lord of the purifying (?) incantation," for which the phonetic reading is **šâ'ilu** (Brünnow, No. 2921), literally, "the asker" or "the inquirer." From a passage like ours it would appear that his functions lay in obtaining an oracle through an offering to the gods, not, however, through the inspection of the sacrificial animal, but in a more direct manner.

⁸⁵ **ma-aš-šak-ka**, explained in the commentary (obv. 37) as **šur-ki-nu** "gift."

⁸⁶ **za-ki-ku**, also an oracle-priest who transmits, as the line indicates, a direct message from the gods. The distinction between the **šâ'ilu** and the **zakiku** is not clear. There are some reasons for believing that the **šâ'ilu** was in reality the necromancer who directed his questions to the shades of the departed.

The **mašmašu**-priest⁸⁷ did not by (his) rites⁸⁸ release me from the ban.

The like of this had never been seen;⁸⁹

Whithersoever I turned, trouble was in pursuit.⁹⁰

To understand the situation as the king describes it, we must bear in mind the Babylonian view already touched upon, that a misfortune to the ruler (or to the ruler's house-

⁸⁷ **(lu)maš + maš = mašmašu** (Brünnow, No. 1844) is, primarily, the exorciser who, through the recital of incantation formulas and petitions in combination with purification rites, secures the release for those suffering from the control of a demon, or for those who have been bewitched. See Zimmern, *Beiträge*, pp. 91-93, and Morgenstern, *Doctrine of Sin among the Babylonians*, pp. 38-41. The four classes of priests here mentioned cover the chief functions of the Babylonian and Assyrian priesthood, and they are introduced in succession, in order to add emphasis to the hopeless condition of the sufferer, who is thus represented as having tried all remedies without success.

⁸⁸ **kikiṭṭū**, the technical term for incantation rites explained in the commentary by the more general word for a religious ceremony **ni-pi-šu**. The text of this line as given in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 39) furnishes the ideographic form for **kikiṭṭu**, namely, **AK.AK**, *i.e.* "actions" or "ceremonies."

⁸⁹ A rather difficult line, reading **a-a i-ti ip-še-e-ti ša-na-a-ti ma-ti-tan**, of which a literal translation would be "not are seen parallel acts in the world." Zimmern first translated the line, "Wie erscheinen doch die Taten anders in der Welt" (*Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, p. 385), and subsequently modified it to "Was für verkehrte Dinge in der Welt" (*Babylonische Hymnen*, p. 29). Neither is altogether satisfactory. The former introduces an idea hardly warranted by the syntactical construction, while in both translations Zimmern proposes an interpretation for **â** (a distinctly negative particle) that is not justified. The phrase might be interpreted as "other happenings will not be seen," in the sense that things have always been thus and always will be, and it is tempting to seek in Babylonian literature for a parallel to the declaration of Koheleth that "there is nothing new under the sun." This, however, would not fit in with the context, which, on the contrary, suggests that the punishment of a pious and god-fearing ruler, whose appeals to gods and priests are rejected, is something new. I take, therefore, **ipšêti šanâti** as "repeated acts," *i.e.* doings like these.

⁹⁰ Read **a-ḥar-ma ar-kat**, "back and front (?)," an idiomatic expression for "on all sides." The unusual word **ip-pi-ru** at the end of the line is explained in the commentary (obv. 41) by two synonyms, (1) **ma-na-aḥ-tum** "distress," (2) **muṣṣu** "sickness." It is interesting to note that the line in the commentary contains two scribal errors, **ri-ša-tum** for **ri-da-tum**, and **ip-pi-e-ši** for **ip-pi-ri**.

hold) foreboded distress for the entire nation. Corresponding to the conclusion which was drawn at a time of general distress, whether produced by bad crops, destructive storms, a plague, defeat in war, or an invasion of the enemy, that some god or goddess was enraged at the ruler, the actual punishment of the ruler or of a member of his household was supposed to involve general trouble and misfortune, the existence of which is therefore assumed. It is a direct result of this close relationship between the ruler and the public welfare that in most of the lamentation songs there is a constant transition from the theme of a misfortune that has overwhelmed a ruler to a wail over some general catastrophe, and then back again from the latter to the former. The king, therefore, in this class of compositions, upon which, as pointed out, our text rests, must be regarded as the representative of the state. In our text this view crops out at various points, although, because of the didactic character of the composition, it is not insisted upon to the same extent as in other laments of rulers,⁹¹ and, as we shall presently see, the larger emphasis is laid upon the plight of the ruler as an individual. The hopelessness of the outlook is forcibly indicated by this appeal to the god and goddess and to the four classes of priests. The gods did not answer, the priests seemed powerless, no omens were granted, no oracles available, and the exorcising rites were of no avail. There was therefore nothing further to be done.

In the next section the ruler proceeds to emphasize, though at first in a somewhat indirect manner, his piety and his steady observance of the precepts of the gods, the implication being that since he has not offended the gods,

⁹¹ For instance, in the lament of Ashurnasirpal II above referred to (see note 68), of which a translation will be found in *Jastrow*, ii. pp. 111-114. This ruler also emphasizes his piety, reminds the goddess Ishtar, to whom his lament is addressed, of what he has done for her cult, and then asks what he has done to merit the grievous punishment meted out to him, which is a painful disease, as in the case of Tâbi-utul-Bêl. Here, however, the parallel between the two texts ends, and the parallel merely furnishes another proof that our text as indicated is *modeled* upon such royal lamentation songs, but serves a different purpose.

his punishment is inexplicable on the ordinary hypothesis that suffering comes to a ruler because of some offense committed that has stirred a god or goddess to wrath. He continues :

As though I had not always set aside the portion⁹² for
the god,
And had not invoked the goddess at the meal,⁹³
Had not bowed my face, and brought my tribute,⁹⁴
As though I were one in whose mouth supplication
and prayer were not constant,⁹⁵
Who had set aside the day of the god,⁹⁶ forgotten the
new-moon festival,⁹⁷
Spurned them [*sc.* the god and the goddess], neglected
their images,⁹⁸
Not taught his people fear and reverence,
Not invoked his god, eaten of his [*sc.* the god's] food,⁹⁹

⁹² **pir-ki-tum** from **parâku** "cut off," "set aside," the reference being to the portion of the offering set aside for the gods, or perhaps, in a more general way, to the tithe for the temple service.

⁹³ To invoke, or more literally "mention" (**az-kur**), the goddess, signifies, similarly, to give her the portion due to her.

⁹⁴ **šu-kin-ni**, from **kânu**, cf. Messerschmidt, *Stele Nabu'naiids*, col. x. 15 **ina šu-kin-ni-e**, where the context shows that "tribute" is meant.

⁹⁵ Literally "in whose mouth supplication and prayer had been cut off or interrupted" (**ip-par-ku-u**).

⁹⁶ *I.e.* the festival day.

⁹⁷ **eš-še-ši**, the term for the new-moon festival, though perhaps used here in a more general sense for any festival day. In view of the fact that, as we know from other sources, the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th day of each month had a special penitential significance, so that on them the king had to abstain from eating cooked food, riding in his chariot, and the like (see Jastrow, "The Original Significance of the Hebrew Sabbath," in *Am. Journal of Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 319 ff., and the latest utterance on the so-called Babylonian Sabbath by Johns in the *Expository Times*, 1905, pp. 566-567), it may be that the reference in the "day of the god" is to these five days which had a special meaning for the king. Such a view would account for the use of the "new-moon festival" as a synonym, since the five days are connected with phases of the moon.

⁹⁸ Read **šalme-šu-nu**, which seems to me preferable to **nu-me-šu-nu** "ihren Ausspruch" (Zimmern). Apart from the fact that the latter word is a very doubtful one in Babylonian, a better sense for the first part of the line is obtained by adding **nu** to the preceding word **id-đu-u-uh-šu-nu** "he rejected them," *i.e.* the gods.

⁹⁹ Here again invoking a god means giving him his portion of the sacrifice.

Neglected his goddess, not offering her drink,¹⁰⁰
 As though the one who had (always) honored¹⁰¹ his lord
 could forget him,
 As though I were like the one who has pronounced the
 sacred name of his god!¹⁰²
 (Whereas) I was devoted in person to supplication and
 prayer;
 Prayer was my practice,¹⁰³ sacrificing my law,
 The day of worship of the gods the joy of my heart,
 The day of devotion to the goddess¹⁰⁴ more (to me) than
 riches;
 Royal prayer,¹⁰⁵ — that was my joy;

¹⁰⁰ The parallelism suggests the reading **maš-tim** (although this usually means "drinking cup" rather than "drink") adopted by Zimmern in his first translation. In his second translation he reads **maš-ṭar**, and renders "document," but it is difficult to suppose that the writer could have intended this.

¹⁰¹ **im-ḥu-u**, explained in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 42) as **ka-ba-tum** "honor."

¹⁰² **niš ili-šu kab-ti rab-iš iz-kur**. Zimmern has correctly taken these words to refer to an unlawful "invocation of his greatly honored [*i.e.* sacred] god." The sacred name was to be invoked by the priest alone, and the interesting line points to the existence of a feeling among the Babylonians, as among the Hebrews, against the profanation of a divine name by an unauthorized use of it.

¹⁰³ **ta-ši-mat** "that which is fixed," hence a practice, custom, and the like. Note again the form without a case ending (as above, p. 159, note 83), whereas in the commentary (obv. 43) we find **ta-ši-ma-tum**, which is explained as **ni-ḫu-u** "offering." **šak-ku-u-a** is explained in the commentary as **par-ši** "my law."

¹⁰⁴ **ūmu ri-ḏu-ti (il) iš-tar**, literally "day of following the goddess."

¹⁰⁵ **ik-ri-be šarri** "prayers of the king," *i.e.* the official cult, in contrast to **ikribê nišê** "prayers of the people," *i.e.* individual or lay prayers (King, *Babylonian Magic*, No. 13, obv. 7), the contrast being between prayers and lamentation songs uttered by a king, constituting (see above, p. 152) a special division of public lamentations, and the prayers of ordinary people, or private, unofficial lamentations. Zimmern's rendering in his second translation, "dem König zu huldigen," misses the point, and, similarly, in the following line he fails to catch the sense. With these lines the complaint of the sorely afflicted Assyrian King Ashurnasirpal II (see above, p. 161) is to be compared (*Jastrow*, ii. p. 114):

Faithfully [I paid homage to thy divinity],
 In thy divine presence [I ever walked];

Chanting to him [*sc.* the god] — a sign of his grace.
 I taught my country to guard the name of the god,¹⁰⁶
 To honor the name of the goddess I accustomed my
 people.
 The glorification of the king I made like unto that of a
 god,¹⁰⁷
 And in the fear of the palace¹⁰⁸ I instructed the people.
 For, indeed, I thought that such things were pleasing to
 the god.

These last three lines appear to me to be crucial for the proper understanding of the exceptionally fine section that follows. After contrasting the manner in which he has been punished — as though he had disobeyed divine precepts and neglected the proper homage to the gods — with his actual conduct, which had been marked by excessive devotion and persistent piety, the thought occurs to him that perhaps he had sinned in insisting upon his own glorification. The phrase that he employs in describing this glorification suggests that he permitted divine honors to be paid him, though in one text¹⁰⁹ the meaning is perhaps intentionally veiled by the use of *eliš* “as on high” instead of *liš* “like a god.” That the latter, however, is really meant is shown by the

As though I had not revered thy divinity [am I tortured],
 Although I have not transgressed nor done wrong, [I have been
 punished].

Ever did I walk uprightly. . . .

¹⁰⁶ *me-e* (so Text C, obv. 9) in sense of “name” (see Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 395 a), for which the scribe in B (obv. 29), mistaking this for *mê*, the plural of *mû* “water,” wrote the ideogram for water (viz. the sign *a*) with the plural sign. Such a mistake in “spelling” suggests that Text B was taken down by dictation.

¹⁰⁷ *i-liš*, according to Text C (obv. l. 11), whereas B (obv. 31) writes *e-liš* “high.” The meaning is about the same, and while the latter may be due to an error in spelling, occasioned by the fact that B was taken down by dictation, one cannot help thinking that the change may have been intentional in order to avoid the distasteful suggestion that the king boasts of actually having had divine honors paid him.

¹⁰⁸ *pu-luḥ-tu êkalli*. The same word for “fear” (*puluḥtu*) is here used as in the preceding lines to indicate “divine fear,” showing that the same kind of fear is intended in both instances. Fear of the king and of royal authority was inculcated, just as was the fear of the god and the “less.

¹⁰⁹ See above, note 107.

following line, the "fear" of the palace being placed through the use of identical terms ¹¹⁰ on a level with the inculcation of divine fear. The two lines are, therefore, of special interest and importance in connection with what we know of the doctrine of the deification of kings, which is a feature in the earlier periods of Babylonian history.¹¹¹ In later times this notion seems to have disappeared, and the line,

For, indeed, I thought that such was pleasing to the
god,

suggests that at the time of the composition of our text a mild opposition to the doctrine had already arisen. Indeed, one is inclined to go a step farther and see in this line not merely a veiled protest against the doctrine of deification of mortals, but the reason why, according to the narrator, Tâbi-utul-Bêl was so sorely punished. In support of this view, it is to be noted that the doubt suggested by the line is made more definite by the train of thought that follows—the hopelessness of man's understanding the ways and thoughts of the gods, and, as an inference, to the general consideration of man's weakness and his uncertain fate. It is a lesson in humility that the writer desires to impress upon us, and this purpose becomes more intelligible if we assume that the lesson is also to suggest the reason for the punishment of the king. Without such an assumption the conclusion would be forced upon the reader that, since the king had done no wrong, the gods had acted arbitrarily, if not cruelly. That the skepticism in regard to a doctrine which was once firmly held should be somewhat veiled is not surprising. The same is the case in the Book of Job,

¹¹⁰ See above, note 108.

¹¹¹ See Radau, *Early Babylonian History*, p. 315, Jastrow, i. p. 170, and the references there given, to which should now be added *Klio* (ed. Lehmann), iii. p. 137 ff., and Lehmann in the Nöldeke *Festschrift*, p. 1002. Gudea (c. 3000 B.C.), for example, had statues erected to himself in the temple of Ningirsu and ordered sacrifices to be offered to them. Naram-Sin, somewhat earlier, calls himself in one of his inscriptions "god of Agade," while in temple documents the determinative for "god" appears before the name of the rulers of Ur.

and it is only in the Book of Ecclesiastes that the skepticism becomes pronounced. But whatever the writer's motives may have been, the question is certainly raised by the line in question whether the king did not overstep the proper bounds in thus associating his authority with that of the gods. He says, indeed, that he acted as he did because he thought the policy to be pleasing to his god, but was he perhaps mistaken in this? Convinced, as he was, of not having failed in his duty toward the gods in all other respects, did his sin perhaps consist in inadvertently arousing their jealousy by claiming for himself, in accordance with traditional beliefs, a position equal to that of the powers on high?

The section that follows, apart from its importance as furnishing the keynote to the interpretation of the text, is noteworthy as one of the finest specimens known to us, if not indeed the finest, of the ancient Babylonian literature. It reads as follows: —

What, however, seems good to oneself, to a god is displeasing,¹¹²

What is spurned¹¹³ by oneself finds favor with a god;

Who is there that can grasp the will of the gods in heaven?

The plan of a god full of mystery (?)¹¹⁴ — who can understand¹¹⁵ it?

How can mortals¹¹⁶ learn the way of a god?

He who is still alive at evening is dead the next morning;

¹¹² *ḫul-lul-tum*, a strong term, equivalent to our "contemptible."

¹¹³ *mu-us-su-kat* "put aside."

¹¹⁴ *zi-e*, which also occurs in the phrase *zi-e uz-ni* in the commentary (V R 47, rev. 10), as the equivalent of *a-mi-ra* "deaf." The underlying stem must therefore have some such meaning as "covering," "closing." I follow Zimmern, who renders "voll von Dunkelheit."

¹¹⁵ *i-ḫa-ak-kim*, from the common Semitic stem *ḫakāmu* "to be wise," "to know."

¹¹⁶ *a-pa-a-ti*, literally "human settlements"; here used poetically for the inhabitants of the settlements, in the sense of sojourners, to emphasize the temporariness of human existence. The term is similarly used for mankind in the lamentation song to Ishtar, published by King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, i. p. 226 (obv. 27).

In an instant he is cast into grief, of a sudden he is crushed;
 For a moment he sings and plays,
 In a twinkling¹¹⁷ he wails like a mourner.
 Like opening and closing,¹¹⁸ their [sc. mankind's] spirit¹¹⁹ changes;
 If they are hungry, they are like a corpse,
 Have they had enough, they consider themselves second¹²⁰ to their god;
 If things go well, they prate of mounting to heaven,¹²¹
 If they are in distress, they speak of descending into Irkalla.¹²²

This passage furnishes, as it were, the keynote to the proper interpretation of the text. While the thought that man cannot fathom the ways of the gods is found elsewhere in Babylonian literature,¹²³ the further reflections upon man's weakness as manifested by his inability to control his own fate, and by his constant change of spirit from pride to despair, are evidently intended to point the moral of the situation, namely, the obligation resting even upon kings who are disposed to place themselves on a level with gods, to humiliate themselves before the higher Powers, and instead of contenting themselves with the mere observance of prescribed rites, to acknowledge their frailty and sinfulness. The passage conveys the suggestion that penitence and contriteness of spirit, and a readiness humbly to confess one's weakness in the face of divine Power, with a complete surrender of all pride of position, must accompany the appeal to

¹¹⁷ The four expressions here used to express a momentary happening, viz. **šur-šiš**, **za-mar**, **ina ši-bit ap-pi** ("twist of the nose"), **ina pi-it pu-ri-di** ("opening of the eyelid[?]"). illustrate the wealth of the Babylonian vocabulary.

¹¹⁸ Explained in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 44) **u-mu u mu-ši** "day and night."

¹¹⁹ **te-en-ši-na** "their reason," the *m* of **têmu** (Hebr. תֵּמָה) being changed to *n* before the sibilant. Above, l. 16, we have **te-im ili** (Text C) "reason of a god."

¹²⁰ **i-šà-an-na-na** from **šanânu** "be second," "be like," etc.

¹²¹ Is there perhaps an allusion here to a legend or myth like Gen. 11?

¹²² One of the names of the lower world, where the dead congregate.

¹²³ See *e.g.* Jastrow, i. p. 476; ii. pp. 88, 104, etc.

the gods. It is a passage like this, therefore, that changes the mere lament into a didactic composition, in which the narrative itself serves to illustrate the writer's purpose. At this point, unfortunately, the tablet becomes defective, but through the neo-babylonian fragment, in combination with the commentary, twelve lines can be restored, which probably fill up all but a few lines of the gap. After thus reflecting on the uncertainty of life and the fickleness of human fortune, with its obvious moral that men should be becomingly meek and humble—an important lesson for kings who lay claim to divine honors—Tābi-utul-Bêl harks back to the description of his sufferings. He takes up again the conventional lamentation strain.

Before we reach the reverse of the Sippar fragment, the commentary supplies the following five lines ¹²⁴:

An evil demon ¹²⁵ has taken hold of me (?);
 From yellowish, ¹²⁶ the sickness ¹²⁷ became white, ¹²⁸
 It threw me to the ground and stretched me ¹²⁹ on my
 back,
 It bent my high stature ¹³⁰ like a poplar; ¹³¹

¹²⁴ V R 47, obv. 46-52.

¹²⁵ **šu-lum**, explained in the commentary as **e-kim-mu**, a general term for "demon."

¹²⁶ Read **ur-ki-t-ki-tum**, a reduplication of the stem **arāḫu** "to be green" like Hebrew קָרַח קָרַח.

¹²⁷ **lu'-tum** "uncleanliness," explained as **mur-šu** "sickness." Disease being due according to current Babylonian ideas to the presence in the body of an evil demon, or to his influence, the sick man was regarded as unclean.

¹²⁸ **i-pi-iṣ-šu**, a denominative of **piṣṭi** "white." The line is probably intended to indicate the change of color in the face, now yellow and again white, in consequence of the disease, though it is also possible that a skin disease with which the royal sufferer is afflicted, and which produces yellow and white spots, is here described.

¹²⁹ The verbs used, **i-ti-ki** and **ra-mu-u**, are entered in the commentary as synonyms and explained as **še-bi-ru** "crush."

¹³⁰ **kat-ti rap-ša-tu**, literally "extended stature." To the passages for **gattu** given by Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* 207 b, may now be added Craig, *Assyr. and Babyl. Religious Texts*, i. pl. 30, 34, and Böllenrütcher, *Hymnen und Gebete an Nergal*, p. 38, who shows that the initial consonant is *k*.

¹³¹ **ur-ba-tu** is explained in the commentary as **ur-ba-nu-u** with the determinative for tree before it. Compare Hebrew עֵרְבָה "poplar," and see Jensen, *Keilinschriftl. Bibl.* vi. 1, p. 452.

Like an **uliltum**,¹³² I was uprooted, like a **puppânu**¹³³ thrown down.

The Sippar fragment begins with the following line and furnishes seven more, of which the first two are also found in the commentary.¹³⁴ These lines continue the graphic description of the king's sufferings:

As one whose food¹³⁵ is putrid,¹³⁶ I grew old.¹³⁷
 The malady dragged on its course.¹³⁸
 Though without food,¹³⁹ hunger diminished (?);
 . . . my blood [became sluggish¹⁴¹ (?)]
 With nourishment cut off¹⁴² (?)

¹³² **u-lil-tum**, evidently the name of a high tree. The underlying stem signifies "strong," and another derivative, also the name of a tree, is **allânu** (Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 71 a) which bears the same relation to Hebrew **אֵל** that **urbânu** does to **עֵרְבָה**. In the commentary (V R 47, obv. 52) it is explained as **su-un-gir-tum**, perhaps "palm."

¹³³ Likewise the name of a tree of lofty stature.

¹³⁴ Only the traces of the first and second lines are preserved in the Sippar fragment, so that without the commentary it would be impossible to do anything with them. As it is, the second line is identical with V R 47, obv. 54, and the preceding line appears to be identical with V R 47, obv. 53, so that the commentary would furnish in this instance two successive lines.

¹³⁵ **aš-na-an-šum-ma**, the word **ašnân** "grain" being used poetically for "food" in general.

¹³⁶ **da-ad-da-riš**, explained in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 53) as **bu'-ša-nu** "smelly." **daddaru** "bitter" is also the name of an ill-smelling weed (cf. Meissner, *Supplement*, p. 8, obv. 17 = *Cun. Texts*, xviii. pl. 32). See also J asen, *Keilinschriftl. Bibl.* vi. 1, p. 452.

¹³⁷ Read **a-la-bir**.

¹³⁸ **ap-pu-na-ma e-te-rik si-li-e-tum**, the commentary explaining the first word as **ma'-a-diš** "greatly" and the third by the sign for "sickness," *i.e.* "the disease was greatly prolonged," or "became chronic."

¹³⁹ Read **i-na[la]ma-ka-li**. The traces of the sign **la** are discernible.

¹⁴⁰ **e-[šu] bu-[bu-u-tu]**. Traces of **šu** and of the second **bu** as well as of the following **u** are to be seen. The sufferer says that although he partook of no food, he was not hungry; he had lost his appetite.

¹⁴¹ **da-mi**, followed by traces of **is-su** according to Messerschmidt. Of the four signs at the beginning of the line, the last two are **mu-ḥa**. The second one appears to be **iš**, while the first, according to Messerschmidt, is not **ti**, as Scheil supposed.

¹⁴² **e-ši-da-tum uz-zu-ḫat**, the former word, literally "crops," being used for nourishment in general, the latter derived from the stem **nazâḫu** "to shut off" (Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 457 b).

(Though) my armor was burnished,¹⁴³ the bow¹⁴⁴ [strong],
Tied to the couch with the outlet closed,¹⁴⁵ I was stretched
out.¹⁴⁶

With the following line, the reverse in Text B begins, and from this point to the end of the second tablet we have four witnesses to the text; namely, Texts B and C, the Sippar fragment, and the commentary, which by itself furnishes no less than eight of the remaining twenty-five lines. The description of the sufferings endured continues to the close of the tablet, ending with a note of despair that manifests itself in the longing for a speedy release through death.

The house became a prison;¹⁴⁷
As fetters for my body,¹⁴⁸ my hands were powerless,¹⁴⁹
As pinions for my person, my feet were stretched out,¹⁵⁰
My discomfiture was painful,¹⁵¹ the downfall severe.¹⁵²
A strap¹⁵³ of many twists¹⁵⁴ held me fast,¹⁵⁵

¹⁴³ **ši-ir-a-nu-u-a** (like Hebrew שִׁירָא) **nu-up-pu-ḥu**.

¹⁴⁴ **u-ri-ik-tum**, which I take as the name of a weapon, another form for **ariktum** "long bow" (Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 133 b), as, above, we have **urḥu** "road" by the side of **arḥu**; similarly, **urruḫiṣ** "rapidly" by the side of **arḥu**; **arḫu** "green" by the side of **urḫu**, etc.

¹⁴⁵ **me-si-ru mu-ši-e**, literally "closed of outlet," i.e. he was unable to get out of his couch, as though it were walled in.

¹⁴⁶ Read **uṣ-ni-[il]** as above. (V R 47, obv. 50.)

¹⁴⁷ **ki-ṣuk-ki**, explained in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 56) as **ki-lum** a "closed off" place.

¹⁴⁸ **ši-ri-ia** "my flesh."

¹⁴⁹ **na-da-a** "fallen."

¹⁵⁰ The commentary has **muk-ḫu-tu**, whereas the Sippar fragment has apparently **ṣum-ḫu-ta**. The word **maš-kan** at the beginning of the line is explained (V R 47, obv. 59) as **bi-ri-tum**, the more common word for "fetter," "chain."

¹⁵¹ Sippar fragment reads clearly **ni-da-tu-u-a ṣum-ru-ša**. The former word, from **nadû** "fall down," describes the fall of the sufferer from strong health to weakening invalidism.

¹⁵² **mi-ḫi-iṣ-tu ḏan-[nat]**.

¹⁵³ **ḫi-na-zu**, explained in the commentary (V R 47, obv. 61) as **gab-ri** preceded by the determinative for an instrument (**giṣ**), i.e. a "large" fetter of some kind. Delitzsch's incorrect reading (*Assyr. Handw.* pp. 143 a, 588 a) of the commentary is to be corrected accordingly, but the other passage quoted by him for **ḫinazu** (IV R 30*, rev. 9-10) proves the correctness of

A sharply-pointed spear¹⁵⁶ pierced me,¹⁵⁷
 All day the pursuer¹⁵⁸ followed me,
 At night he granted me no respite whatever,
 Through wrenching¹⁵⁹ my joints were torn apart,
 My limbs were shattered¹⁶⁰ and rendered helpless;¹⁶¹
 In my stall¹⁶² I passed the night like an ox,¹⁶³
 I was saturated like a sheep in my excrements;¹⁶⁴

his view that a leather strap of some kind is meant; not indeed a "whip" as Zimmern has it, but rather a strap plaited of many single strips.

¹⁵⁴ **ma-la-a ṣil-la-a-tum**, for which the Sippar fragment has the feminine **ma-la-ti**. The word **ṣil-la-a-tum** is explained (V R 47, obv. 61) as **ṣa-ta-a-tum** "twists" (?).

¹⁵⁵ **iḏ-da-an-ni**, from **nadû** "cast down."

¹⁵⁶ **pa-ru-uš-šu**, explained (V R 47, rev. 1) as **ḥaṭṭu** "staff," here, however, used as a weapon. **zi-ṣa-ti** (variants **ta** and **tum**) **-dan-nat**, literally "strong in points," *i.e.* sharply pointed.

¹⁵⁷ **u-saḥ-ḥi-la-an-ni**. See Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 493 a.

¹⁵⁸ **ri-ḏu-u**. The demon causing the disease is meant.

¹⁵⁹ **i** (variant **u**)-**tab-lak-ku-ti**. See Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 176 a.

¹⁶⁰ **su-up-pu-ḥa**.

¹⁶¹ **i-ta-at-ta-a a-ḥi-tum** (variant **ti**) "thrown to one side," *i.e.* worthless.

¹⁶² **ina ru-ub-ṣi-ia**, the word **rubṣu** being the term used for the stall of an ox or horse. The sufferer likens his chamber, in which he lies helpless night and day, to an ox-stall.

¹⁶³ **a-bit**, from **bātu**, which accordingly has in Assyrian, as in Arabic, the meaning "pass the night," or perhaps simply "remain."

¹⁶⁴ **ina ta-ba-aš-ta-ni-ia**. The word is explained in the commentary (V R 47, rev. 3) as **ṣu-u** (Hebrew שִׁי and שִׁי) "feces," and **ši-na-tum** (Hebrew שִׁי and שִׁי) "urine." The term, therefore, comprises the excrements in general, both solid and fluid. These two lines as well as the four following lines bear such a close resemblance to the fragment of a "bilingual" lamentation (IV R² 22, No. 2) that some literary relationship between the two must be assumed. The fragment reads as follows:

Marduk has laid [him] low;
 By day sorrow, at night grief,
 And terror overwhelming him in dreams.
 No **bârû**-priest guided him by an inspection (**bi-ri**),
 The **šā'ilu**-priest through the offering (**mu-uš-ša-ak-ka**) revealed
 nothing;
 Yoked to his misfortune, he obtained no respite (**ul i-na-aḥ**),
 The **āšipu**-priest obtained no release through an exorcism.
 Like an ox he was thrown on his couch(?),
 Like a sheep saturated (**bu-lul**) with his excrements ([**ina ta-ba-aš-ta-ni-šu**];
 To the brink of destruction [he was brought down].

It will be observed that the sufferer is spoken of in the third person. It

My diseased joints¹⁶⁵ the **mašmašu**-priest tore apart¹⁶⁶ (?)
 And my omens¹⁶⁷ the **bârû**-priest set aside,
 The **āšipu**-priest could not interpret the character of my
 disease,¹⁶⁸
 And the limit of my malady¹⁶⁹ the **bârû**-priest could not
 fix.¹⁷⁰
 No god came to my aid,¹⁷¹ taking me by the hand,
 No goddess had compassion for me,¹⁷² walking by my
 side.
 The grave¹⁷³ was open, my burial¹⁷⁴ prepared;

is therefore an interceding priest who is speaking, or the narrator of a tale. The former supposition is unlikely because of the length of the description. The latter is more likely, and the question suggests itself whether this extract may not be a part of the third tablet of our series, in which, as will presently be shown, the narrator steps forward and describes Tâbi-utul-Bêl's anguish. If this be so, then the bilingual form of the fragment would point to the existence of an older ideographic or "Sumerian" version of the tale of which our second tablet and the portions of other tablets of the series preserved in the commentary represent the phonetically written version. See *Jastrow*, ii. p. 130, note 1.

¹⁶⁵ Written **SA.GIG** = **maš-ka-du** (Brünnow, No. 3149). The two signs signify "sickness of the joints." In Text C there follows **itti-ia**, whereas the Sippar fragment apparently reads **maška-du-ia**, for which I propose the rendering "my diseased joints." We have here one of the few instances of ideographic writing in our text.

¹⁶⁶ **iš-ḥu-tu** "to tear violently." Exactly what is meant by the phrase it is difficult to say. From the context, however, it is clear that the **mašmašu**-priest afforded no relief.

¹⁶⁷ **te-re-ti-ia**. The term **têrtu** is used in the omen texts to indicate the omens derived from the inspection of the liver of the sacrificial animal. See *Jastrow*, ii. p. 214, note. The reference here is to the attitude of the diviner, who instead of interpreting the omens set them aside.

¹⁶⁸ **ši-kin mur-ši-ia** "the state of my disease."

¹⁶⁹ **si-li-'-ti**, the same word which above (V R 47, obv. 55) is written **si-li-e-tum**.

¹⁷⁰ **id-din** "gave."

¹⁷¹ **i-ru-ša**, from **râšu** "help." Another instance of the verb is found in King, *Magic and Sorcery*, No. 53, 4, **ru-ša-nim** (imperat. plural).

¹⁷² **i-ri-man-ni**.

¹⁷³ **ki-maḥ** (Text C), for which the Sippar fragment has **ki-ma-ḥu**, a method of writing that shows clearly the purely artificial character of the ideographic equivalent **KI.MAH** ("great place," i.e. gathering place for the dead), which is a mere play on the word. It is therefore to be removed from the list of "Sumerian" loan-words given by Leander (*Die Sumerischen Lehnwörter im Assyrischen*, p. 12).

¹⁷⁴ **šu-ka-nu-u-a** "my resting place." Cf. German "*Grablegung*."

Though not yet dead, the lamentation¹⁷⁵ was over;
The people of my land had already said "alas"¹⁷⁶ over
me.

My mocker¹⁷⁷ heard it and his face shone;
As the joyful tidings were announced to him, his liver¹⁷⁸
rejoiced,

Supposing that it was the day for my whole family,
When among the shades, their deity would be hon-
ored (?).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ **bi-ki-ti** (variant **tum**), the official lament over the dead being meant.

¹⁷⁶ **ha-bil**, identical with 𐤁𐤁𐤍, which appears constantly in Palmyrene funeral inscriptions and is the equivalent of our "alas." See a note by the writer in the *Zeitschr. für Assyriologie*, xx. No. 1.

¹⁷⁷ **ha-du-u-a**, meaning the one who makes sport of him, *i.e.* his ill-wisher or rival.

¹⁷⁸ **ka-bit-ta-šu**, for which the Sippar fragment has apparently **ka-bit-ta-ša**.

¹⁷⁹ The last two lines are very obscure. While every word but the very last is perfectly clear, it is difficult to determine exactly what is intended. Zimmern in his first translation (*Keilinschriften u. d. A. T.* p. 387) rendered them as follows:

Ich weiss (aber) eine Zeit, da meine Thränen zu Ende sind,
Wo inmitten von Schutzgeistern ihre Gottheit geehrt ist.

He was inclined to see in these lines an allusion to a doctrine of salvation. In his second translation however (*Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete*, p. 30), by reading the last word of the first of these two lines **kim-ti-ia** "my family" instead of **dim-ti-ia** "my tear," the meaning is considerably modified:

Ich weiss (aber) eine Zeit für meine gesammte Familie.
Wo inmitten der Manen ihre Göttlichkeit geehrt sein wird.

The reading **gi-mir kim-ti-ia** "my whole family" is decidedly preferable, and the translation proposed by the writer (*Jastrow*, ii. p. 128) is to be altered accordingly. The reference, however, is, as the writer indicated, to the premonition that the sufferer had of his approaching death, which he expresses in a forcible manner by intimating that he was already regarded as dead by his family and friends, and that his enemies had already manifested their pleasure on hearing the "joyful tidings." This thought, it would appear, is continued in these last two lines of the tablet. Instead of taking **idi** as the 1st person of the verb "I knew," it seems preferable to make the enemy the subject of the verb and to take **idi** (3d person) in the sense of "believing," "supposing," which it often has. The expression "day for my whole family," I take as a euphemistic phrase for the day of death, used in order to avoid an ill-omened utterance. Just as at the beginning of the second tablet (Text B, obv. 16) "day of God" is the sacred day, so here "the day

In this closing passage we may again observe how the conventional lamentation strain blends with the didactic character of the composition. From the description of his sufferings, Tâbi-utul-Bêl, as in the opening passage of the second tablet, passes over to reflections upon his sad condition, though he does so here in the form of a dramatic summary of the despair into which he was thrown. The repetition of the vain appeal to the gods and to the various classes of priests¹⁸⁰ might still be regarded as an integral part of the lament, but the remaining six lines betray the didactic character of the composition, and are introduced to illustrate the king's despair, in order to prepare the hearer for the miraculous salvation through the grace of Bêl, which forms the main theme of the two remaining tablets of the composition. The allusion in the closing line to the doctrine of the deification of kings after death is significant. It suggests that the opposition of the writer, above referred to, was directed not so much against this doctrine as against its consequence, the awarding to royal authority of the rank of a god. He falls in line with sanctified tradition in

of my whole family" is a day of special significance for his family, a day occupied with sacred burial rites which would be an appropriate designation in a euphemistic spirit of the day of his death. There is at all events no reference whatsoever in this line to any hope of eternal salvation. In the following line I am inclined to see a reference again to the current doctrine of the deification of kings. The word used for spirits is *še-de-e*, ordinarily the designation for a lower order of divine beings, and since there are traces of ancestor worship among the Babylonians as among all ancient nations, the *šêdê* may well have been extended, as Zimmern supposes, to designate the departed spirits in general, who if properly cared for were looked upon as protectors of the living, *i.e.* a species of protecting spirits. Among these protecting spirits, the king, in accordance with prevailing beliefs, was regarded as divine, *i.e.* as belonging to a higher order of beings known as *ilâni* "gods." The line is therefore practically synonymous with the preceding one, and, like that one, is to be taken as a euphemistically worded allusion to the expected death of Tâbi-utul-Bêl. The last word of the line may be read either *i-rim* "merciful" or *i-ḫir* from *aḫâru* "to be precious," "honored," and the like. If the interpretation here proposed is correct, the preference is to be given to the latter reading.

¹⁸⁰ Note that the classes here mentioned are the *bârû* "diviner," *âšipu* "exorciser," and, thirdly, *mašmašu*, whose functions appear to be identical with the *âšipu*.

admitting the kings to a special place after death, differentiating them from ordinary mortals, but at the same time, through the king's admission of his weakness and sinfulness, emphasizes the fact that rulers, like all other beings, must bow in subjection to the will and authority of the gods.

The second tablet thus ends in a dismal note of utter despair, and the opening line of the third tablet, preserved in the colophon to Text C and also in the commentary,¹⁸¹ suggests that the thought of self-destruction had at least entered the mind of Tâbi-utul-Bêl:

The weight of his hand¹⁸² I was no longer able to endure.

With this line, however, we approach the close of the sufferer's lament, for the next line of this tablet, preserved in the commentary, introduces the name of the sufferer, and in the following line this sufferer is spoken of in the third person. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that after five or six lines, if not sooner, the third tablet changes into a narration of what happened to Tâbi-utul-Bêl. The first line of the third tablet sounds, indeed, like a portrayal of the depth of despair to which Tâbi-utul-Bêl had been brought. Like Job¹⁸³ he was weary of his life and longed for death, convinced that his tortures were beyond endurance. As already intimated, we are dependent for the third and fourth tablets upon the commentary, and since in all only thirty lines of these two tablets are preserved, or, according to our calculations, about one-eighth of their original extent, it is, naturally, impossible to expect them to yield more than a general outline of the further course of the composition. Not far from the beginning of the third tablet we find, as already intimated, the narrator stepping forward and indicating that Tâbi-utul-Bêl was rescued from the jaws of death. Since only three lines in the commentary deal with the words of

¹⁸¹ V R 47, rev. 4. Text B preserves the first two signs of this line, and the Sippar fragment also shows traces of two signs. See above, p. 144.

¹⁸² **kab-ta-at** **ḫatâ-su** (variant **ḫat-su**). The hand of the oppressing demon is meant. The word **kabtu** is explained in the commentary as **dan-nu** "strong."

¹⁸³ Job 10 1.

the narrator, the interruption of his part could not have covered any considerable portion of the third tablet, perhaps twenty-five to thirty lines. The three lines, which are clearly not continuous, read as follows:

Ṭâbi-utul-Bêl¹⁸⁴ dwelling in Nippur,
He spake,¹⁸⁵ "How long yet,"¹⁸⁶ deeply sighing,
The strong ruler,¹⁸⁷ decked with the turban.¹⁸⁸

The description of the king's despair, appealing vainly to the priests and brought to the brink of the grave, as set forth in the fragment referred to above (note 164), would

¹⁸⁴ See above, p. 149. The name may be interpreted as "good is the shelter of Bêl." The word **utul**, construct form of **utlu**, is to be derived, like **utullu** "herd," from the stem **nâ'lu** "to lie down," and therefore means the place where one lies down, the spot where one seeks shelter. The reference may be to the temple of Bêl, which would be appropriately designated as a shelter. The meaning here proposed accords with the context in the other passages in which the term occurs (see Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 158 a), and is rendered certain by such a passage as IV R 20, No. 1, 8, **ina ut-lu mu-ši ṭa-a-bu**, etc., "in a good night-shelter." Zimmern (*Babylonische Hymnen*, p. 30), while admitting that the sufferer who speaks in the second tablet is a king, does not appear to have recognized that Ṭâbi-utul-Bêl is the name of this king. He makes Bêl the subject of the words "dwelling in Nippur," and takes the preceding words, apparently, as a description of the god. The passage above (pp. 149 ff.) discussed (V R 44, col. II, 17) seems to have been overlooked by Zimmern, who is thus led to the view that in the succeeding line of the commentary the god Bêl gives utterance to the lament, "How long yet." This is entirely out of the question, and both lines become perfectly clear if we take them, as here proposed, as part of the narrator's description of what Ṭâbi-utul-Bêl did.

¹⁸⁵ *I.e.* Ṭâbi-utul-Bêl.

¹⁸⁶ **a-ḫu-la-pi** (or, as we also find it written, **aḫulâpia**) is explained in the commentary as **a-di ma-ti** "how long yet." It is one of the technical terms for a lament with an appeal for relief, and is then further extended to designate the hoped-for conciliation with the angered deity. It sometimes has the force of "O that at last." See Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 43 b and *Jastrow*, ii. p. 60, note 2, p. 67, note 12, p. 68, note 6. Though a compound adverb, it is used as a noun with pronominal suffixes attached, "my," "thy," or "his," **aḫulâpi** in the sense of my, thy, or his lament, and appeal for divine reconciliation.

¹⁸⁷ **id-lu ḏar-ru**, the latter somewhat unusual word being explained in the commentary (V R 47, rev. 7) by **ḏan-nu**, the common word for "strong."

¹⁸⁸ **a-ga-šu**; **agu** is the turban-shaped headgear of gods and kings, a symbol, therefore, of royalty, like the crown of later times.

appropriately follow. Be this as it may, the second of these lines, in which the technical term *aḫulāpi*, characteristic of the lament and appeal of a sufferer, is introduced, is clearly a reference to the king's outpouring of his woes, as set forth in the second tablet; and the use of this term is a valuable confirmation, though an indirect one, of the view here maintained, that our composition as a whole is based upon the lamentation songs, showing, as it does, that in the mind of the writer Tābi-utul-Bél's speech is placed in the category of the ordinary lamentation songs. The reference in the third line to the crowned ruler is an important confirmation of the view here maintained that the whole composition tells the story of a ruler, and that the various tablets of the series embody a continuous text. The failure hitherto to recognize this fact has prevented the correct interpretation of this text, which may properly be designated, both because of its intrinsic interest and of its striking resemblance to the story of Job, as one of the most important yet found among the remains of Babylonian literature.

With the following line of the commentary we are again introduced to Tābi-utul-Bél as the speaker, and since what follows is a hymn of rejoicing and of thanksgiving on the restoration of the royal sufferer to health, it is clear that the narrator, after mentioning the name of the ruler and setting forth his lament and appeal to the gods, more particularly to Bél, must have indicated that the king's humiliation and earnest penitential spirit had moved the gods to show their power and mercy by saving him from the grave that seemed his inevitable doom. Corresponding to the description in the first and second tablets of how one organ after another had been destroyed by disease, he tells of his gradual restoration to his former health and strength. Bearing in mind again that in general the lines of the commentary are not continuous, and that we can only surmise how much is missing between the lines preserved, this description reads as follows: ¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Partially translated by Zimmern, *Babylonische Hymnen*, p. 30. My German translation (*Jastrow*, ii, pp. 131 f.) was in press before Zimmern's brochure reached me.

My sins¹⁹⁰ he caused the wind to carry away,¹⁹¹
 [Mine eyes which had been bolted he opened],¹⁹²
 Mine ears which had been closed and bolted as a deaf
 person's¹⁹³
 He took away their deafness,¹⁹⁴ he restored my hearing,
 The net¹⁹⁵ (?) which had shut (me) in,¹⁹⁶ he released¹⁹⁷
 from round about me,¹⁹⁸
 He healed, and my breast resounded like a flute,¹⁹⁹
 The fetters which enclosed²⁰⁰ (me) like a lock he un-
 locked.

¹⁹⁰ **e-ga-ti-ia**, explained in the commentary as **hi-ṭa-a-ti**.

¹⁹¹ See Zimmern's note *l.c.*

¹⁹² This line may be added as the complement to the loss of eyesight described in the first tablet (V R 47, obv. 20, 21). See above, p. 157, note 69.

¹⁹³ Compare the corresponding line above, p. 157. **ḫa-šik-ku**, explained in the commentary as **suk-ku-ku**.

¹⁹⁴ **a-mir-ši-na**, explained in the commentary **a-mi-ra = zi-e uz-ni** "closing of the ear." See above, p. 166, note 114.

¹⁹⁵ The word at the beginning of the line is probably to be read **ur-u-di**, though other readings are possible. The context suggests that a net or trap of some kind is meant, and from the underlying stem **warādu** "to go down," "pursue," "follow," such a meaning for **urudu** could be derived. My translation is offered merely as a suggestion.

¹⁹⁶ Read **in-ni-is-ru** IV, 1, from **esēru** "to inclose."

¹⁹⁷ **u-nap-pi-ḫu**. Compare the Talmudic use of נָפַח (Jastrow, *Talmudic Dictionary*, s.v.).

¹⁹⁸ **la-gab-biṣ**, adverb from **lagābu**, explained in the commentary **ša a-mat pag-ri**, i.e. "with reference to the body." The verb **lagābu** occurs in omen texts, e.g. *Cuneiform Texts*, xx, Pl. 9 (Sm. 418), 10, and Pl. 25, 13, and is explained as **paḫāru** "surround," and as a synonym of **lamū** "besiege," "surround." Cf. Boissier, *Note sur les textes divinatoires du British Museum*, pp. 9 f., who quotes our passage but misreads the word preceding **unappiḫu**. I have no hesitation in taking **lagabbīṣ** in the sense of "round about," and interpreting the note in the commentary as an indication that the term refers to the "surrounded" body, which by the grace of Bēl has now been freed from the net which had inclosed it.

¹⁹⁹ **ma-li-liṣ** explained in the commentary **ma-li-lu = im-bu-bu**, apparently the more common word for "flute," but also introduced here to avoid a misinterpretation of **maliliṣ** "like a flute," since the **malilu** is ordinarily the instrument of "lamentation," and not of rejoicing, as the context here requires. Cf., for example, Haupt, *Akkadisch-sumerische Keilschrifttexte*, No. 19, obv. 11, and see Jeremias, *Babyl.-assy. Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode*, pp. 44-45.

²⁰⁰ Read **la-ga-a-a ša i-sir**, and correct Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 373 a, accordingly. The commentary explains **lagā** as **ši-ik-tum**.

The one weakened by hunger²⁰¹ he made strong like a
 powerful, well-knitted sprout.²⁰²
 He brought me food,²⁰³ he provided drink.
 The neck that had been bent downwards²⁰⁴ and worn
 He raised erect like a cedar,²⁰⁵
 He made my form²⁰⁶ like one perfect in strength.²⁰⁷
 Like one rescued from an evil spirit,²⁰⁸ my lips (?) cry
 out,²⁰⁹
 He poured out their wealth,²¹⁰ he embellished their
 property.

²⁰¹ **un-šu**, explained by the more common word **bu-bu-tum**.

²⁰² **ki-ma pi-ir an-ni-ni rak-su**, the metaphor being that of a strongly rooted tree.

²⁰³ **ip-te-en-ni**, explained by the more common word **ma-ka-lu-u** "food."

²⁰⁴ **ir-na**, explained in the commentary as **šur-šu**, *i.e.* to the bottom. The commentary enters, as synonyms of **ir-na**, **e-re-e-na** and (the plural ?) **e-re-na-ti**, which apparently occurred in other copies of the text.

²⁰⁵ **a-ma-liš**, the commentary adds **a-ma-lu** = (**giš**) **U.KU** = **ašuhu**, for which see Brünnow, Nos. 9492 and 9493, and Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 83 b. Some lofty tree is meant.

²⁰⁶ **u-ma-ši**, explained in the commentary as **KAK.MU**, which, as Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 93 b, suggests, is to be read **nabūtia**, or perhaps **binūtia** (Brünnow, No. 5249) "my stature."

²⁰⁷ **a-na ga-mir a-ba-ri**, to which the commentary adds **a-ba-ru** = **e-mu-ku** "power."

²⁰⁸ **ki-ma na-kim-tum šu-ši-i**. In the commentary we read (**LU**) **šu-šu-u** = **ša Ištar ana išati tušēšu**, *i.e.* "one whom Ishtar rescues through fire," — the reference being to a purification rite by means of fire in order to drive out the evil demon. As an aid to the understanding of the comment we have an interesting passage (quoted by Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handw.* p. 463 a), in an incantation ritual (IV R 28*, No. 3, obv. 11), where Ishtar is appealed to as follows:

li-še-ši nak-ma u na-kim-ti ša zu[mria]

"May the male and female demon be driven out of my body."

The passage shows that **nakimtu** is the female demon, and the juxtaposition with **nakmu** is paralleled by the frequent use of **lilû** and **lilitu** in incantation texts. Cf. *Jastrow*, i. pp. 280, 308.

²⁰⁹ The second half of the line, which reads **u-šap-pi-ra šu-ša-a-a**, is obscure. Instead of **šušâ** Delitzsch (*Assyr. Handw.* p. 572 a) proposed to read **šu-pur-a-a**, but although at first inclined to accept this, I think on further reflection that there is no satisfactory meaning to be obtained from such a phrase as "my nails are cut" (or "scratched"). My tentative suggestion "lips" is based upon the context and on a passage like IV R 16, No. 2, rev. 61 **šap-tan mu-uš-šap-ra-tum** "lips that cry out."

²¹⁰ **ma-na-aḥ-tum**, which the commentary through an interesting mis-

My knees that were caught like a mountain bird,²¹¹
 My entire body²¹² he restored;
 He wiped out the anger,²¹³ he freed from his wrath (?),
 The depressed form²¹⁴ he cheered up.

It may not be amiss to emphasize again the correspondence, extending to the use of the same terms, between this account of the restoration to health of the various parts of the body and the description in the first and second tablets of the sufferer's gradual loss of power. Corresponding to the loss of hearing (V R 47, obv. 22) his hearing is, in response to his appeal, restored to him. Through the anger of the god his body is bent like a poplar (obv. 50), and through divine grace he is made erect as a cedar. Unable to take nourishment and deprived even of the craving for food (Sippar-fragment, 33), when once the anger of the gods ceases, food and drink are given to him in plenty and his strength is restored. Apart from the proof thus furnished

understanding explains as **GIG**, the ideograph for **muršu** "sickness," as in the second tablet (V R 47, obv. 41), but whereas this use of the word is in place in the latter passage, in the former it does not accord with the second half of the line, in which as a synonym **bušâ-šun** "their property" occurs, this being explained in the commentary as **kaḫḫadu** "capital." Now **manaḫtu** like **kaḫḫadu** is of frequent occurrence among the technical terms occurring in legal and business documents in the sense of "income," "revenue," and the like. This is the meaning that it has in our passage, and the use of the plural suffix in the case of both **manaḫtum** and **bušû** is an indication that Tâbi-utul-Bêl has at this juncture in his hymn of thanksgiving passed over into a general praise of Bêl's goodness to those who appeal to him.

²¹¹ **bu-ši-iš** explained in the commentary **bu-ši** = **iš-šur ḫur-ri** "bird of the gorge."

²¹² **šuk-lul-tum pag-[ri]**, explained as **la-a-nu** "form," "stature."

²¹³ **ma-am-me-e**, to which the commentary adds **ma-am-mu** = **šu-uh-tu**, which, according to Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handv.* p. 651 a, would appear to mean "anger." Zimmern, however (*l.c.*), renders "rust," and the complementary term **ru-šu-uš** "like burnished gold." The verb at the beginning of the line **ma-ša-šu** is explained as **ka-pa-ru**, which, considering the usage of the Hebrew **כָּפַר** and the corresponding Arabic verb, accords better with "anger," "wrath," and the like. The commentary takes the word as an adverb explaining **ru-ši-iš** (or **šub-ši-iš**) by **LU** (or **DIB**).**BI**, perhaps = **šub-burušu** "his wrath (?)" (Brünnow, No. 10,696).

²¹⁴ **du-u-tum**, explained as **bu-un-na-nu-u** "form."

that the tablets of this series form a continuous text and that the speaker who gives thanks is the same as the one who poured forth his complaint, the correspondence throws an interesting light on the literary methods of the Babylonian scribes.

The following two lines of the commentary may represent the closing lines of the hymn of thanksgiving. The first of the two lines contains an allusion that is somewhat obscure; the correct translation of the second we owe to Zimmern. The lines read :

To the shores of Nâru,²¹⁵ the place of the judgment of
humanity,²¹⁶ they crossed over,²¹⁷
The forehead brand²¹⁸ was removed, the slave mark taken
away.²¹⁹

Nâru, the personification of the sacred river Euphrates, stands here, poetically, for the river itself. The commentary identifies "the shores of the divine stream" as **Hur-ša-an**, and Hommel²²⁰ is no doubt right in recognizing in this word the name of some sacred spot, though his further speculations as to the locality of Huršan await confirmation. Nippur being the home of Tâbi-utul-Bêl, we should expect the sacred seat of judgment to be not far from the famous city, and if it be recalled that the name of the chief temple of Bêl was **E-kur**, which signifies "mountain house," it is tempting to see some connection between **E-kur** and **Huršan**, which also means "mountain." Was **Huršan**, perhaps, the name of a sanctuary on the Euphrates near Nippur? Or does it possibly represent the phonetic form corresponding to

²¹⁵ Written with the sign for river preceded by the determinative for God. See *Jastrow*, i. pp. 164, 166, 300.

²¹⁶ **a-šar di-en niše**.

²¹⁷ **ib-bir-ru**, which, despite the somewhat unusual form of writing, is to be derived from **ebêru** "cross over."

²¹⁸ **mut-tu-tu**, see below, note 223.

²¹⁹ **ab-bu-ut-tum**, explained in the commentary as **bi-ri-tu** "fetter." See below, note 224.

²²⁰ *Grundriss d. Geogr. und Geschichte d. alten Orients*², p. 251, note 3. It is not certain whether in all of the passages adduced by him **huršan** is to be taken as a proper name.

E-kur²²¹ ? If so, the line might merely be a poetic description of the sanctuary of Nippur. Leaving these speculations aside, the interesting line evidently refers to a religious rite symbolizing the triumphant justification of Ṭābi-utul-Bêl, who is brought to a sacred spot where by a ceremony of some kind he is purified from the uncleanness which his disease and sin had brought upon him, and so restored to his former high rank.²²² Whether or not the second line immediately followed in the full text, the two lines belong together. It will be recalled that in the first tablet the royal sufferer says of himself :

From being a king I became a slave.

The sign used for slave is the ordinary one for **ardu**, and corresponding to this we encounter in the line under discussion two terms, **muttutu**²²³ and **abbutum**²²⁴, which are

²²¹ In the hymn to Bêlit, published by Scheil (*Zeitschr. f. Assyr.* x. p. 292, obv. 2), 1-**ḫuršānu** appears to be used as a synonym of **E-kur**.

²²² See Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, pp. 54-55, for illustrations from various sources of purification from sin through immersion or other ceremonies performed at a sacred stream.

²²³ The most important passage for **muttutu** or **muttatu** is in one of the so-called "family laws," where as a punishment for the son who repudiates his mother, it is ordained **mu-ut-ta-as-su u-gal-la-bu** "they shall brand his forehead" (V R 25, rev. 31 c, d) and deprive him of citizenship and of his heritage. For this interpretation of the phrase see Jensen, *Keilinschriftl. Bibl.* vi. 1, p. 377, and Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts, and Letters*, p. 176. The same phrase occurs in the Hammurabi Code, § 127, as the punishment meted out to the one who slanders a votary or a man's wife.

²²⁴ **abbutum** occurs in the law regarding the repudiation of a father by his son, the punishment for which is **ab-bu-ut-tum i-ša-ak-kan-šu**, i.e. "an **abuttum** is placed upon him" (l.c. 27), and he is sold. In the Hammurabi Code, § 146, a mistress is accorded the right of **ab-bu-ut-tam i-ša-ak-ka-an-ši** "the putting of an **abuttu**" on a maid who, as the concubine of the husband, claims equal rights with her. Similarly, in §§ 226 and 227, the term is used to denote as here some symbol, stamping a man or a woman as a slave, and since in both these instances the verb **galābu** "brand" is used (as with **muttatu**), it is clear that the word may also denote a brand of some kind, perhaps on the ear, to which a reference is found on a legal tablet (Strassmaier, *Inskriften des Cambysses*, No. 291), though it is also possible that in this passage a birthmark is intended. According to the commentary, to be sure, the word is a synonym of **bīrtu** "fetter," but this appears to be a derived meaning, because "fetters" were also put on slaves. Its original force was, as it would

employed in legal tablets as well as in the code of Hammurabi as symbols of slavery, the former being the brand on the forehead, stamping one as a slave, and the latter a slave mark of some other kind. The line, therefore, indicates by the use of a striking metaphor the restoration of the king to his royal rank, and with this his sufferings and degradation come to an end. As with Job, everything — health, possessions, and position — is given back to him.

Whether these two lines still belong to the third tablet cannot, of course, be determined. They would form an appropriate close, and at all events the few following lines, preserved through the commentary, and furnishing, as it were, the moral of the narrative, may safely be reckoned as part of the fourth and concluding tablet.²²⁵

He who sins²²⁶ against E-sagila,²²⁷ through me let him see.
In the jaw of the lion²²⁸ about to conquer me²²⁹ Marduk
placed a bit;²³⁰

seem, a "slave mark" in general, and the etymology suggested many years ago by Haupt, who connected it (*Sumerische Familiengesetze*, p. 35) with Hebrew עֲבָדָה "service," so that it would be a derivative of the same stem as *abdu* "slave," may turn out to be correct, despite Zimmern's objections (*Babylonische Busspsalmen*, p. 59), which are indorsed by S. A. Smith (*Keilschrifttexte Asurbanipals*, Heft iii. p. 29). Because of this general sense the word came to be used, on the one hand, as a synonym of *muttatu*, which means specifically the "forehead-brand," and, on the other hand, as a "fetter." As a "fetter" it may have been applied also to the clay tablets or disks (of which there are a number in the Louvre and in the British Museum) containing the names of slaves, which must have been attached to the slave in some way, perhaps hung on the ear. It would be appropriate to speak of such attached pieces of clay as "fetters." See Johns, *l.c.* p. 176.

²²⁵ Traces of three further lines are to be seen prior to these. In one the explanation *re-e-mu* "mercy" can be read; in another the words "gift (?) with . . . I came"; in a third "their street (?)".

²²⁶ *e-gu-u*, explained as *ḥa-ṭu-u* "sin."

²²⁷ Name of Marduk's chief sanctuary in Babylon.

²²⁸ *gir-ra*, explained by the common compound ideograph **UR.MAH** "big dog" for lion.

²²⁹ Read *ākil-ia*, literally "the one eating me." In the omen texts *akālu* "consume," "finish," is frequently used as a synonym of *kašādu* "conquer," as here. See *Jastrow*, ii. p. 254, note 8.

²³⁰ *nap-sa-mu*, explained in the commentary as *ma-ak-ša-ru ša pī sīsī* "restraining piece in the horse's mouth," *i.e.* a bit.

Marduk seized the one ready to overwhelm me,²³¹ and completely encircled his bulwark.²³²

It is evident that in these lines the king is impressing upon mankind the moral of the thrilling experience through which he had passed, precisely as at the close of the main version of the Babylonian creation-story, — in reality a pæan in honor of Marduk, — the lesson of the tale of Marduk's triumph over Tiamat is unfolded; ²³³ and it is a reasonable supposition that the narrator added for himself further lessons to be derived from the story, and that with such moral injunctions the fourth and last tablet ended. The reference to sinning is important as a proof that, despite Tâbi-utul-Bêl's assertion of his piety in the second tablet, he acknowledged in the course of the narrative that he had actually transgressed. Hence the value of the lesson drawn from his experience, that confession of wrong-doing must accompany the appeal for deliverance from suffering and misfortune. The lines reveal also, as pointed out at the beginning of this investigation, the adaptation of the story to later conditions, when all great deeds were ascribed to Marduk, as the head of the pantheon after the days of Hammurabi. Hence the mention of E-sagila, Marduk's temple in Babylon, which must be regarded as substituted by a later editor for E-kur, Bêl's temple at Nippur. The hand of this editor is likewise betrayed in the double mention of Marduk, who replaces En-lil, or Bêl. In the original form of the story we may be quite sure that Bêl was the deity invoked at the beginning and at the close of the composition, and that E-kur was named as the temple.

By means of suggestive metaphors the king impresses upon his subjects the power of the gods and their mercy. Though priests were of no avail and he seemed about to be swallowed

²³¹ *mu-kaš-ši-di-ia* from *kašâdu*. See note 229.

²³² *as-ri as-suk-ka-su u-saḥ-ḥir* "with an inclosure he surrounded his bulwark." Parts of four additional lines are to be seen, but they are too fragmentary for consideration.

²³³ Tablet vii. 125-142 (King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, i. pp. 110-115).

up by death, Bêl, or in the later version Marduk, intervened. The enemy, the demon of disease, was already preparing to celebrate his triumph, when his bulwark was surrounded and he was forced to yield. Let all, therefore, draw the lesson, which we may assume was spun out by the king and the narrator to the close of the fourth tablet: When in despair, confess your sins, humble yourself before Bêl, and if you merit it as did Tâbi-utul-Bêl, the pious king of Nippur, your appeal will be heard, your suit will be judged, and your ultimate justification proclaimed; suffering, misery, and distress will cease; health, strength, power, and position will be restored; and you will live to sing the praises of your saviour.

V

Before leaving the subject it may be proper to add some further remarks on the general character of the composition, which will lead us to the question as to the bearing that this interesting production may have on the Biblical story of Job. If our investigation of this composition has brought out the correct interpretation, namely, that it is an old story told for the purpose of discussing and illustrating current doctrines regarding the reason of suffering, the weakness of man, his proneness to sin, his dependence upon the gods, the necessity of humility in the presence of the higher powers, and the justification of supreme confidence in Bêl or Marduk, all of which themes, as we have seen, are touched upon in the course of the composition, it throws an important light not only upon the theology of the Babylonian priests, but upon the advanced literary methods employed by them. The very existence of such a text as ours points to a prolonged antecedent course of literary activity. We may safely assume that this text did not stand alone, but that it is a specimen of a distinct branch of literature, didactic in its purpose, which may not without reason be compared to the so-called "Wisdom Literature" of the ancient Hebrews, itself, likewise, essentially didactic.

The parallel presented to the Book of Job is in some

respects striking. Apart from the similarity of the general theme and of the situation unfolded, attention deserves to be called to the similarity in the method employed in the two compositions. The Book of Job, like our Babylonian text, rests upon an older popular tale,²³⁴ and it would be rash to assume that this older story of a pious man who lived in Uz and who, despite his piety, was sorely tried by some deity, is devoid of all historical foundation. Popular tales, unless they turn out to be pure nature myths, are not apt to be manufactured out of the whole cloth. The story is simple enough to rest on a basis of reality, though naturally, in the form in which it is now embodied in the philosophical poem of Job, it has undergone considerable modification from its original character in the process of adapting a non-hebraic folk-tale to a Jewish atmosphere. That the story is of foreign origin is so patent as to require no demonstration. The name Iyyôb has no Hebrew etymology, although the original name may have been modified to give it at least the semblance of a Hebrew noun formation. The home of Job is Uz, which leads us towards Edom, even though the precise locality cannot be determined. The names of his three friends are likewise foreign, and their homes lie outside of Hebrew territory, and although the three friends may not have had any place in the original folk-tale, the very fact that, when introduced by a Hebrew writer, foreign names and foreign homes were assigned to them, is a proof that the foreign origin of the tale was still present in the consciousness of the people. If, as seems probable, the story came to the Hebrews from the side of Edom, perhaps carried along by a wave of Hebraic migration that passed through Edom, the name of the deity in the Edomitic version was certainly not

²³⁴ See for this older story of Job, as contrasted with the present Book of Job, the introductions in the commentaries of Budde, Duhm, etc., as well as the Introductions to the Old Testament by Driver (6th ed., p. 412), Cornill (p. 235), etc., and such works as Kautzsch, *Poetische Bücher des Alten Testaments*, pp. 109 f., where, although Kautzsch does not accept the hypothesis of an older popular story of Job, he does not deny that the story existed in unwritten form.

Jahveh.²³⁵ The introduction of this name into the prologue represents the natural modification of the foreign story, and so the introduction of the technical term for sacrifice עֹלָה (Job 1 15) may be ascribed to a natural and popular process of adapting the story to later Jewish surroundings, with a view to making Job a pious Jew, observing distinctly Jewish ordinances. The popular process of modification did not go much further than this, and as a consequence the Jewish veneer over the character of Job is so thin that it can be removed without much difficulty. The introduction of the three friends is, as I believe, the work of the author of the philosophical poem with a view to providing the necessary framework for the philosophical discussion of the problem of human suffering and of divine justice which constitute the main theme of the Book; and it is probably to this author likewise that we owe the introduction of the figure of Satan in the prologue, under the probable influence of religious ideas that came to the Jews from Persia. If the assembly of the gods sitting on a certain day, perhaps annually, in judgment is part of the original folk-tale, then instead of Satan there must have figured a member of some lower class of deities, such as were the demons and spirits of Babylonia, who acted as messengers to the gods. It will be seen, therefore, that in the modifications which the non-hebraic tale underwent we have to consider two factors, (1) the popular process of adapting the story, so far as seemed essential, to Jewish surroundings, (2) the further modifications introduced by the author of the philosophical poem in order to mold the story to his purposes and to remove traces

²³⁵ In view of Montgomery's "Notes from the Samaritan," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, xxv. 1906, pp. 49 ff., and more particularly Schmidt's note, *ib.* p. 50, the form *Jahvah* might appear to have the preference over *Jahveh*, but against this Arnold's suggestive discussion (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, xxiv. pp. 154 f., 163-165) has clearly shown that, even if we spell the name with *a* in both syllables, the evidence from various sources is sufficient to prove that the *a* did not have a pure sound. The form *Jahveh* may therefore be retained with the understanding that even the *a* in the first syllable tended towards *ä* (like *a* in "fare"), though not to the same degree as the second *a*.

that no longer accorded with more advanced religious conditions.

That under these circumstances two stories though reverting to a common source should show as many points of divergence as points of agreement is not surprising. From the points of divergence, therefore, between the story of Tâbi-utul-Bêl and the story of Job no valid argument can be drawn against the assumption of a common source for the two tales. On the other hand, to claim more than this would be to force the argument drawn from the points of resemblance beyond the bounds of a reasonable scientific method. If the story of a pious sufferer who does not lose his faith in the gods came to the Hebrews from the Edomites, there is no valid reason why the Edomites should not have received it from a region still farther to the east, and in receiving it have adapted the tale to their own surroundings.²³⁶

²³⁶ It is rather curious that in an addition at the end of the Book of Job in the Greek version Job is a king, identical with Jobab ben Zerah of Bosra, the king of Edom mentioned in Genesis 36 33, 34. It may be, of course, that this notion is an invention of the Hellenistic period (see Dillmann's commentary, pp. 360 f., and Budde, p. xii), but on the other hand there may lurk behind it a faint recollection that the sufferer was of royal rank. If the name Iyyôb represents, as has been suggested, an adaptation of a foreign name to a Hebrew noun formation, the change from Jobab to Iyyôb would not be particularly violent, and, again, if the story of a suffering king came to the Edomites from Babylonia, they would naturally have transferred the tale to one of their own rulers. We have seen the peculiar position assigned to the king in Babylonian theology as standing nearer to the gods than ordinary mortals. Is there not some trace of the prevalence of this view among the Hebrews in the tradition which makes Koheleth a king, which connects the main figure in the Song of Songs with Solomon, as the type of the mighty and wise ruler in Jewish tradition, which makes the Psalms royal prayers ascribed to David as the type of the pious king (precisely as most of the hymns and prayers in Babylonian literature are put into the mouth of a king), and which ascribes the authorship of Proverbs to Solomon as the type of the wise king? Considerations of this nature suggest that the tradition which makes Job a king may represent a legacy of the past, or at all events a recrudescence of ancient notions associated with the position of the ruler. From this point of view the opposition toward kingship which crops out under the influence of the prophetic religious ideals, implied in the Pentateuch (*e.g.* Deut. 17 14-20) and more pronouncedly in the historical books (1 Sam. 8), becomes intelligible. It is because of the religious danger involved in the popular association of king-

Of more importance, however, than the possible indirect connection between the two stories (and more than an indirect connection is not claimed here) is the comparison that may be instituted between the literary methods employed in the two productions. In both a popular story, and essentially the same story, is used as the framework for a composition having a distinctly didactic purpose. The story of Tâbitul-Bêl is told as an illustration of certain doctrines held by the author, which, through the medium of a royal sufferer, he wishes to impress upon those who read the story or to whom it was read in the temple as part of an atonement ritual. In the Book of Job the story of the pious sufferer is used as a *mashal*, a "parable" in the Midrashic sense, as an effective means of placing before us, in the form of an elaborate discussion between Job and his friends, the author's views of the ways of God and of the problem involved in the story. We are not concerned here with the solution, which is essentially pessimistic, though the attempt is made to tone down the pessimistic note by the addition of the speeches of Elihu with the introductory matter (chaps. 32-37) and the introduction of Jahveh himself (chaps. 38-41),—whether these additions were made by the author himself or by later editors to whom the philosophical discourses seemed unorthodox,—but with the treatment of the problem. In this respect there is a striking similarity between the two productions. Though the intellectual grasp as well as the literary process in Job is of an infinitely higher order than that exhibited in the Babylonian production, in both the main figure is represented as laying stress upon his piety, in both there is the suggestion of an

ship with divine prerogatives that the religious movement brought to a crisis by the prophets enters its vehement protest against according to any mortal a special position nearer than that of his fellow-men to the throne of the one and only King. It may perhaps not be amiss to add that the Greek translator of Job, who made the three friends of Job likewise "rulers," was influenced by the tradition embodied in the addition at the end of the translation. The visitors of a king might naturally be conceived as holding equal rank with him. In the apocryphal "Testament of Job" Job and his friends are likewise represented as kings.

accusation against divine justice, in both the thought that God's ways are unfathomable is prominently brought out, and in both the necessity of man's humbling himself before the higher powers constitutes to all practical intent the last word. In view of all this, and of the profound influence exerted over the Hebrews by Babylonian culture and literature, traces of which are to be discerned in so many pages of the Old Testament, it is difficult to resist the impression that a product such as we have been investigating may have suggested to the Hebrew philosopher to take up the old story of the pious sufferer, as it had developed among the Hebrews in post-exilic days, and to furnish, in contrast to the Babylonian treatment, a Jewish discussion of the eternal problem of human suffering — precisely as in the creation and deluge myths we have the Jewish treatment of themes the material for which was furnished by Babylonian traditions. Further than the assumption of a suggestion emanating from the Babylonian composition, directly or indirectly, we are not justified in going, chiefly because the age to which Job belongs is too far removed from the atmosphere in which the Babylonian composition was produced to permit of any direct borrowing on the part of the Hebrew writer. Literary influences, however, may be potent without necessarily pointing to direct borrowing, and this observation holds good in general for the relationship between Hebrew and Babylonian literature. The Psalms betray the literary influence of Babylonian hymns and lamentations without showing any traces of direct borrowing.²³⁷ The Book of Lamentations, consisting of laments and appeals on the occasion of national misfortune, is the adaptation of the Babylonian lamentation songs to Jewish surroundings, and similarly the laments in the Book of Job are based, as are the laments of Tâbi-utul-Bêl, upon the existence of these same Babylonian lamentations. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to allow a boundless scope to accident in creating the resemblances in both story and treatment between the Babylonian and Hebrew productions, the hypothesis of lit-

²³⁷ See *Jastrow*, ii. pp. 133-137.

erary influence, reënforced by the possession in common of an indefinite amount of folk-lore, legendary lore, and ancient traditions, suggests itself as a satisfactory solution of the problem involved in a comparison of the story of Tâbi-utul-Bêl, and the treatment of the theme of human suffering there found, with the strikingly parallel story of Job.